TOM GEOGHEGAN: THE INFERNAL SENATE

THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 21, 1994 • $2.95

The Abandoned Muslims

Europe's long, vicious war against Islam in the Balkans

By Fouad Ajami

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CORRESPONDENCE

Breast assured

To the editors:

Malcolm Gladwell's article, "How Safe Are Your Breasts?" (October 24) exposes the influence of cost control upon alleged scientific medical judgments. In more than thirty-five years of practicing and teaching obstetrics-gynecology, I've been impressed that medical cost-cutting inordinately emphasizes women's health care issues, particularly in the field of prevention. Just recently, *The New England Journal of Medicine* ran two articles on this theme, each with flaws similar to the breast studies noted in your article. The result of all of these reports will be that insurance companies and HMOs will not pay for these services, and women's access to preventive care will be restricted. Consumers should know that the conclusions of these "scientific" articles are not gospel.

WILLIAM J. LEDGER, M.D.
Obstetrician and Gynecology-In-Chief, The New York Hospital
New York, New York

To the editors:

The issue of mammography coverage in the context of how Clinton's health care plan was marketed to the American people is interesting. We were told to believe that it was possible to get more health care while sacrificing little or nothing. But the trade-offs inherent in such a sweeping piece of social legislation abound.

The Clinton administration seized upon the National Cancer Institute's less-than-ringing endorsement to justify routine mammography coverage only after the age of 50 in its standard benefits package. In addition, routine pap smears for women who have had three consecutive normal pap smears would only be covered every three years until the age of 40. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology could not identify any study to support this schedule and continued to recommend annual screening. With an estimated 24 million Americans carrying the virus linked to cervical cancer—ususally only detectable through pap smears—this coverage would pose risks to women's health.

CARRIE J. GAVORA
Arlington, Virginia

To the editors:

There is a coda to Malcolm Gladwell's excellent "How Safe Are Your Breasts?" Early last summer, Dr. Susan Blumenthal, deputy assistant secretary for health and human services, asked me about technologies that might aid mammography; radiologists have difficulty detecting tumors from mammograms, especially small tumors in younger women, for whom greater breast density increases the difficulty of the search. I said that intelligence had been developing techniques in recent years to speed the analysis of satellite imagery, which might prove useful to radiologists.

Over the summer, intelligence engineers applied their algorithms to mammography. On a set of mammograms, we found that imagery technology can permit veins to be aligned and the images digitally subtracted to highlight breast tumors. Dr. Daniel Kopans, a Harvard Medical School physician who was quoted in Gladwell's article, has stated that these intelligence techniques may so improve early detection that 30 percent of the 46,000 women in the U.S. who die annually from breast cancer may be saved.

Applying technology in innovative ways can permit a shift in effectiveness, bypassing entrenched organizational positions that were based on old views of what was technically possible. The government can create opportunities for those who are willing to take a fresh look at seemingly intractable problems—in this case, radiologists and intelligence officers—to work together.

R. JAMES WOOLSEY
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Although my personal experience is anecdotal, it illustrates a problem of the National Cancer Institute's past policy on breast cancer. As a woman under 50 who had an increased risk of breast cancer, I followed the institute's advice to have annual mammograms. Publicity about the effectiveness of mammograms was so persuasive that I had the impression that mammograms not only caught tumors early but that they caught virtually all tumors. I never heard that mammograms miss a large percentage of tumors. This confidence led me to be negligent about breast self-examination. Four months after a mammogram revealed no tumor, I found a lump that turned out to be a malignant and aggressive tumor. It already had reached stage two. Everyone is responsible for his or her own health, in consultation with physicians. Contrary to the implication of Malcolm Gladwell's article, massive public health advice can backfire.

JANE S. SHAW
Bozeman, Montana

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To the editors:

As a physician, I read with interest your article "How Safe Are Your Breasts?" Unfortunately, Dr. Samuel Broder, director of the National Cancer Institute, relies solely on analyses of "outcomes" when deciding the importance of mammography for women under 50. Much of modern clinical medicine concentrates on the care and prevention of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Meaningful studies of outcomes can thus take ten to twenty years to complete. During this period, technology and pharmacology in the screening and therapeutic methods for these diseases may improve (as with mammography), making the studies obsolete. Physicians have to superimpose the results of clinical studies onto a background of knowledge, clinical judgment and common sense in deciding appropriate screening and therapy. It is imperative for a patient to choose a physician he or she can confide in and trust.

I found it disconcerting when Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell told the American Medical Association on March 17, 1992 that "outcome research is a linchpin of health care reform" in controlling costs. Under Mitchell's proposal, many women may be denied mammograms because of a lack of "meaningful" studies of outcomes. Major health care decisions may stem from a centralized bureaucracy in Washington, and patients and physicians may lose the right to decide on the appropriate test or therapy.

EDWIN J. ROSMAN M.D.
Great Neck, New York

To the editors:

I was distressed to read the discussion of cystic fibrosis in Robert Wright's article "Mr. Clean Genes," (TRB, October 24) He describes a British woman who carries the gene for cystic fibrosis. A woman alone cannot have a child with cystic fibrosis; both the mother and father must carry the gene for the child to be affected. There is a grim trend toward holding women solely accountable for prenatal decisions and for children's genetic defects. We should not ignore the responsibility and interest of the men.

ROSEMARY QUIGLEY
Chicago, Illinois

To the editors:

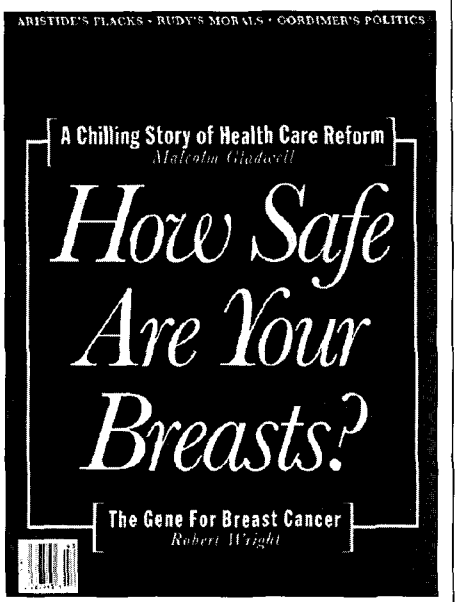
Robert Wright seems to assume that effective breast cancer therapy is not in our immediate future. This assumption is pessimistic, as we undoubtedly will learn a great deal about breast and other cancers. Detected early, many cancers have high remission or cure rates.

Breast cancer, other cancers and many other genetic diseases are not diseases of childhood but affect people in their twenties, or even their seventies. The lives we could "screen out," as Wright puts it, might turn out to be healthy, happy and productive for many years; by the time the disease is manifest, even more effective treatment (or a cure) might be at hand. Thus, prevention of late-onset diseases that we now are coming to understand in unprecedented detail may not be so urgent because of the almost inevitable availability of treatment. Prevention of such births may not only be questionable, but objectionable.

MICHAEL A. GOLDMAN
San Francisco, California

To the editors:

The "How Safe Are Your Breasts?" articles were informative and timely, but I found the scarlet cover and reference to Michael Lewis's article, "Titillation" to be offensive. If you prepare an issue on


ARISTIDE'S FLACKS · RUDY'S MORALS · GORBIMER'S POLITICS
A Chilling Story of Health Care Reform
Malcolm Gladwell
How Safe Are Your Breasts?
The Gene For Breast Cancer
Robert Wright

prostate cancer, will the cover read, "How Safe Are Your Testicles?" Reporting on such a serious, sometimes fatal, condition with such an inappropriate cover is insulting to TNR's female readers.

PATTI MASSEY
Fairfax, Virginia

No to vengeance

To the editors:

We at the law firm of Hogan & Hartson were surprised to read ("Flack Attack," by Ruth Shalit, October 24) that we were "shut out" of working with Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in planning for his transition from exile to governing. Had your reporter inquired of Haitian officials, she would have learned that Hogan & Hartson lawyers have been deeply involved in virtually every aspect of the complex legal issues related to this transition. Three members of our firm's team accompanied Aristide on his return to Port-au-Prince on October 15, and he has asked us to continue our work for his government. To the source who, for whatever reason, gave THE NEW REPUBLIC the false information we say simply: "No to vengeance, no to violence, yes to reconciliation."

MICHAEL D. BARNES
Counsel to President
Jean-Bertrand Aristide
Washington, D.C.

High-porn area

To the editors:

In "Titillation" (October 24), Michael Lewis is so close to the point, he misses it. Yes, porn shops in formerly abandoned buildings may actually improve the area. But this is exactly Mayor Giuliani's proposal—to put them in places that are non-residential. Instead of picking a highly commercial area of New York City like 14th to 31st Streets for his largely anecdotal evidence, why doesn't Lewis come to a highly residential area like 8th and 9th Avenues from 42nd Street to 53rd Street? Instead of walking around as a single man, why not send his wife to walk down those streets and see how her quality of life is affected? Ask her how many cars slowed down and tried to solicit her, and how many times she felt as if she were treated like a prostitute. I have lived in a high-porn area and it's no fun around those porn stores.

MELISSA BELL
New York, New York

Dissuaded by facts

To the editors:

In "The Sorrow and the Facts" (October 17), Walter Laqueur writes, "Not a single denier of the Holocaust has ever been dissuaded by facts; if one argument is disproved, they think of another." Isn't Jean-Claude Pressac, author of *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* (Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989), an important counter-example?

GABRIEL STOLZENBERG
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Laughing sickness

To the editors:

Andrew Sullivan's reaction to *Diseased Pariah News* ("Washington Diarist: Relentless," October 10) suggests to me that I can wait for deeper thoughts from TNR about endometriosis, childhood leukemia, prostate cancers, suicides, etc. Will the fun never cease?

RICHARD V. USPEL
Sullivan, Wisconsin

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TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

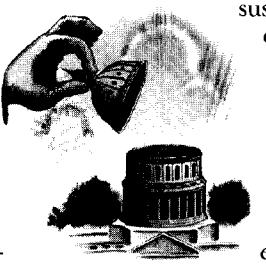
The inner cynic

During a recent roundtable discussion on "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," a commentator spent a few moments pondering whether the popular attitude toward Washington is best described as "hatred" or "loathing." This is one of several signs that analysis of this year's official election theme—"cynical and angry electorate"—has reached a point where additional nuance would be of meager value. For purposes of punditry, this well is about dry. Still, there are no signs that the mid-term elections will cathartically dispel America's discontent. Like it or not, President Clinton will spend the next two years trying to lead a cynical and angry electorate. That's how he spent the past two years, and he never mastered the task. Can he do better? Here is TRB's four-step self-help plan for the president.

1. *Get in touch with your inner self: recognize that you and your kind are scum.* Almost all politicians are, as charged, phony and dishonest, willing to jettison principle and embrace untruth to preserve or advance their place in the hierarchy. This has been the case at least since the dawn of recorded history, and the voters' recognition of it is welcome evidence of budding enlightenment. What's unwelcome is their failure to see that they're roughly as bad as the average politician. According to science's current understanding of evolution, all human beings are designed by natural selection to be unprincipled (if unknowingly) in pursuing status. All of us have let down a friend or a cause, or talked out of both sides of our mouth in order to become or remain popular, to get a promotion or to hang on to a job. Politicians are just in the unenviable position of having their status threatened massively and regularly, having the outcomes hinge on their answers to a zillion questions, and having the answers recorded.

There is a second sense in which voters, unbeknownst to them, are the very things they hate. As some (lately *The Economist*) have pointed out, the dishonest contortions politicians go through are just an attempt to please the electorate. That this often disserves the public good—and produces, say, a chronic budget deficit—is ultimately because interest groups (that is, voters) refuse to sacrifice, even when they might benefit in the long-run.

2. *Confront your co-dependency.* Though all human beings are desperate to be liked, Clinton, as has been amply noted, is more so. His fierce reluctance to tell anyone "No," his habit of portraying even obvious debacles as successes—both boil down to an acute intolerance of even momentary losses of esteem, and both lead to enduring losses of esteem. That these self-destructive habits may be only an amplified form of the basic Homo sapien plan for social advancement doesn't help. However deeply human Clinton's social impulses, they're not working.



3. *Know your social environment.* One reason deeply human impulses aren't a good guide to living is that we're not living in the sort of stone-age society for which the impulses were designed. We're in the T.V. era—and, more specifically, the Letterman epoch. The working, often apt, assumption is that everything any politician does is phony. Facile self-promotion doesn't work the way it used to.

Consider Clinton's attempt to make lemonade out of his lemon of a visit to Syria. His claim of "significant progress" didn't come close to surviving the scrutiny of pundits. Clinton could have gotten more mileage out of admitting his grave disappointment, even giving President Assad a mild dressing down. He would have looked tough and honest. Of course, in times as cynical as these, even a strategy of tough honesty can be depicted as, well, a strategy. ("Striving to shake his image as a Pollyanna, President Clinton today...") Indeed, it's increasingly hard to imagine utterances that, no matter how heartfelt and true, *wouldn't* be received cynically.

There are two options. One is to do things so irrational as to defy cynical deconstruction. ("President Clinton, in a move that aides were at a loss to explain, today placed a Whoopee Cushion in the chair of Syrian leader Hafez al-Assad.") This is not a viable strategy. Hence Plan B.

4. *Become a Cynic.* I don't mean the kind of cynic the average voter is. I mean a cynic like Diogenes, Cynicism's founding father. The roots of Cynicism lie less in suspicion of others than in suspicion of self. The Cynics realized that the obsession with social esteem is the enemy of truth and principle. (Though, contrary to current evolutionary thought, they considered this corrupting influence artificial, and the rational pursuit of truth "natural.") The Cynics' prescription was asceticism—not just skipping the Big Macs, but eschewing all concern with public approval. The idea was to doggedly not care what anybody thinks.

As if this social asceticism wouldn't be challenge enough for someone like Clinton, step two of the Cynics' prescription was to walk around loudly telling the unpleasant truths that asceticism had freed them to perceive—including, especially, truths about the falseness of everyday life. As Cynicism authority I.G. Kidd put it, the Cynic "was the 'watchdog of mankind' to bark at illusion, the 'surgeon' whose knife sliced the cancer of cant from the minds of others." This is how Cynicism, though in its self-denial akin to Buddhism, got a reputation for being cynical; it was a life of self-suspicion, yes, but the suspicion was *secondarily* trained on everyone else too—and the results were broadcast, much to the public's discomfort.

Okay, go ahead, laugh: Bill Clinton as a Buddhist with an attitude. But shifting into a mode of searing and unselfconscious honesty, combatting brutal postmodern irony with brutal earnestness, may at this point be the only way to reclaim his presidency from the cynical spin of the times. And it would be so refreshing! Just imagine: the notorious Alice Rivlin memo gets leaked, and rather than have an urgent spin-control consultation and methodically decide to betray Rivlin, Clinton just calls a press conference to explain that she's right. This would be part of the larger truth that a Cynical Clinton could drive home on a regular basis: what voters are ultimately cynical and angry about is themselves; if they can't stomach, say, the Rivlin memo, then they're no better than the politicians they rightly abhor.

And if the voters don't like this message, screw 'em. There's a real chance they actually *would* end up liking it, but the point is that this effect will depend on a non-cynical spin, and thus on Clinton's convincing himself that he really doesn't care. Feeling impolitic may be the only good political strategy left.

Of course, it may not work. Diogenes wasn't a popular guy. (Plato called him "Socrates gone mad.") But there's always posterity. Two-and-a-half millenia after he lived, Diogenes still gets talked about. At the rate things are going, how long will Bill Clinton be remembered? Two years of a Clinton who told the American people that they ultimately hate themselves would get a bigger place in the history books than eight years of the Clinton voters have grown to know and loathe.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 21, 1994

DON'T PANIC

Californians are in a foul mood, and, like much of the babyish electorate this year, are looking for scapegoats. Most Americans have targeted Congress, the much-maligned president, or the nebulous "special interests" for blame. But Californians have found a more motley crew to beat up on: illegal aliens. Almost powerless politically, these aliens make a perfect target.

"While our own citizens and legal residents go wanting, those who choose to enter our country ILLEGALLY get royal treatment at the expense of the California taxpayer," reads the ballot description of Proposition 187, a widely popular initiative that would deny social services to illegal immigrants. The initiative, called "Save Our State" by its supporters, is backed by two out of three Californians.

Why should Californians fund social services for those in the country illegally? It's not a ridiculous question. Researchers agree that illegal immigrants, who come to the U.S. younger, poorer and less educated than legal immigrants, are a net deficit to the economy. The Urban Institute concluded that illegal immigration costs California $2 billion a year—and that was the most generous study. What's more, after years of decline, the rate of illegal immigration began to boom in 1989. Last year, an estimated 3.5 million illegal immigrants were living in the U.S., more than a third of them in California.

But Proposition 187 does little to stem this tide. In fact, its overheated rhetoric, which is exploited by the state's politicians, may exacerbate the problem. Despite the myth its proponents perpetuate, the debate is not over welfare; illegal immigrants are already ineligible for welfare. Rather, it is over educational and medical benefits—basic services that the Supreme Court ruled in 1982 illegal immigrants were entitled to. And there's a practical problem. If the proposition passes, teachers and nurses would essentially double as federal agents; they would have to check the status of anyone they suspect is illegal, and report violators to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In a truly dark twist, students who are citizens would be required to turn in their illegal parents. All of this would make for disastrous social policy. As many as 300,000 children could wind up on California's streets. And most illegals would likely forgo even basic medical service, such as immunizations, rather than risk deportation.

The dangers of substituting private citizens for INS agents have already been proven. Last year, the federal government conducted a review of the 1986 Immigration Reform Control Act, which instituted employer sanctions. The review found that the sanctions against illegals went largely unenforced. At the same time, researchers found widespread discrimination against job applicants who "appeared" foreign: 10 percent of those surveyed checked the documents only of those employees they described as "foreign-looking"; 8 percent said they were less likely to hire someone with a foreign appearance or accent; and 15 percent would hire only American citizens. If Proposition 187 passes, no one doubts that a Hernandez would be more suspect than a Smith.

Republican politicians have wasted no time in tapping into Californians' thirst for a scapegoat. Governor Pete Wilson has made support for the proposition a centerpiece of his re-election campaign, and senatorial candidate Michael Huffington has also endorsed it. Their hypocrisy has escaped no one but the California voters. Wilson, as a senator in 1986, authored the law that gave legal residency to anyone who could offer proof, however flimsy, that he or she had once been an agricultural worker. Huffington took an illegal nanny with him to Washington just two months after introducing a bill calling for a five-year jail sentence for anyone who transports an illegal immigrant.

The vicious rhetoric of Proposition 187 has had one positive effect: it has prompted a twinge of conscience in some. Senator Dianne Feinstein, though struggling to fend off Huffington's challenge, last week denounced the proposition; it might cost her her seat. And Republicans William Bennett and Jack Kemp blasted members of their party for turning immigrants into an "all-purpose punching bag." They reminded their party that it will be defined "not simply by the policies it proposes but by the spirit it embodies." It is a message Californians should heed. •

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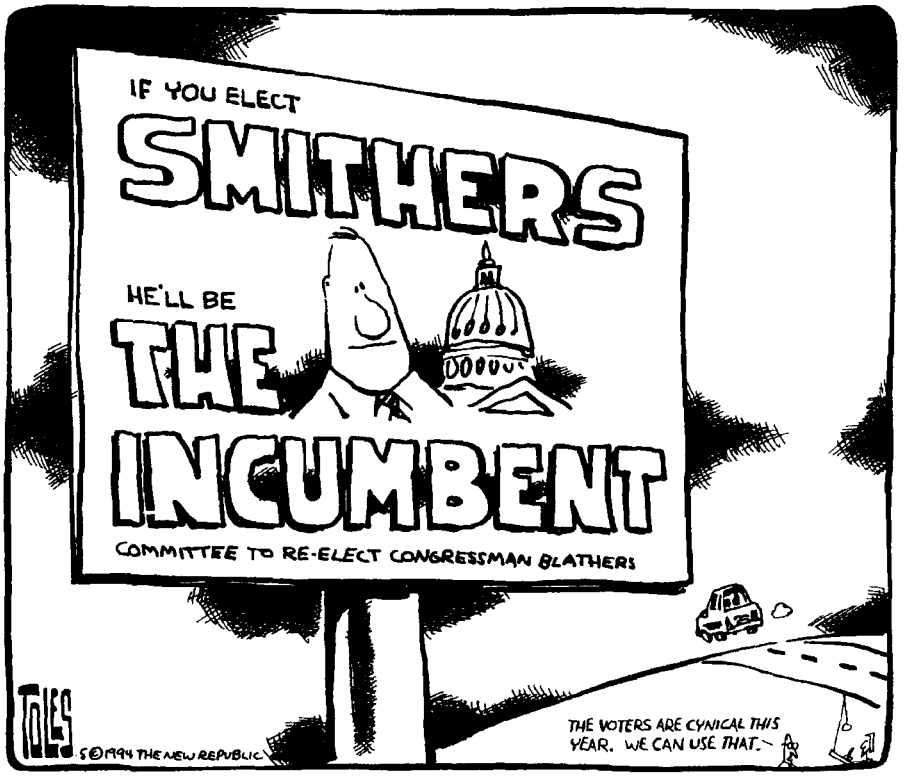
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Francisco Duran of Colorado fired more than twenty shots at the White House. Citing threats and lack of funds, Joel Ford of Mississippi dropped a $45 million lawsuit that claimed the Bible was based on hearsay and biased against blacks and gays. Lawyers for a Texas man accused of murdering two residents of inner-city Fort Worth argued that he was not guilty due to Urban Survival Syndrome, "the fear that black people have of other black people." Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty. Russian counterfeiters produced fake banknotes that misspelled the word "Russia," which appears prominently at the top of the bills. An American Eagle flight crashed in Indiana, killing all 68 passengers. British bookmakers Ladbrooks gave nine-to-four odds that Bill Clinton would win re-election. Republicans nominated twenty-four black candidates in congressional and senate races, the largest number ever. Prosecutors dropped charges against Tayyibah Amatullah, an Islamic woman ticketed in St. Paul for wearing a veil. The World Health Organization voted to destroy the last two repositories of the smallpox virus. Bowling Green University freshman Julia Miller was charged with threatening to shoot her roommate's compact-disc player because it was "a bit of an annoyance." Aldrich Ames admitted to betraying more than 100 U.S. and allied intelligence operations. St. Louis City Councillor Freeman Bosley Sr. launched a petition drive for a referendum to allow the public paddling of graffiti artists. Churches in Atlanta and Sacramento held "Hallelujah Nights" as an alternative to Halloween, where children won prizes for the best biblical costume. An Israeli woman applied for a divorce from her husband after he demanded she color and style her hair like Hillary Clinton's and "lost all control" on hearing the First Lady would visit Israel.



HOW CAN YOU PUBLISH AN ISSUE OF *THE NEW YORKER* AND NOT BRING UP O.J. SIMPSON? PART V: "When Charles Nesson, one of the professors at Harvard Law School teaching a course for first-year students devoted entirely to the O.J. Simpson case, received a telephone call from a woman who said she was a clerk for Judge Lance A. Ito, who is presiding over the trial, he thought the call might be a hoax."—From an October 31 "Talk of the Town" item titled "Judge Ito's Helpers." "In life and in death, Moana Pozzi touched a nerve of obsession for Italians in much the same way that on a far vaster scale the O.J. Simpson case has for Americans."—Same issue, same section, different item. "The perils of a system dominated by consultants are amply illustrated by the jury selection procedures now under way in (what else?) the trial of O.J. Simpson. In August, using advice from their respective jury consultants, the prosecution and the defense in the Simpson case submitted questions..."—Same issue, "Juries on Trial," by Jeffrey Toobin.

CAFFEINE TIME AGAIN:

Study Says Schools Must Stress Academics
—*The New York Times*, September 23

Man May Have Died of Natural Causes
—*The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 10

Planning group looks to the future
—*The Canyon Courier*, September 28

Dee Dee Myers Finally Moves to Spacious Office
—*The Los Angeles Times*, October 9

(With many thanks to Christopher Morgan, Athens, Georgia; Robert Glidden, Moragaa, California; Peter Helseth, Evergreen, Colorado; and Kenneth Alexander, Culver City, California.) •

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FRANKFURT AN DER ODER POSTCARD

GNOMENKLATURA

By Anna Husarska

Sprechen Sie Deutsch? "*Natürlich!*" I used to answer. But four years of German lessons in a Warsaw secondary school were obviously not enough to make me fluent, especially since our teacher preferred to teach the socially and morally correct words, which tended to be long, such as *Friedensbestrebungen* for "peace endeavor" or *Vergangenheitsbewaltigung* for "overcoming the past." We never studied fairy tales, a lacuna that came back to haunt me.

For here I was at the German-Polish border in Frankfurt an der Oder confidently ready to ask the German customs officers about the rules for importing garden gnomes. (Bear with me.) Only then did I realize that I had never learned the German word for "gnome." Undeterred, I tried a roundabout approach. I asked about bringing "little red people" into the country. Two peroxide female customs officers looked at each other with puzzled faces. The older one said something to the younger one of which I understood only separate words—"*Komunist*" and "*nicht mehr?*" [no more]—and the snotty tone.

I backed up, fished out my notebook, sketched a rather impressive likeness of a gnome and tried another synonym. Pecking the sketch with my pen, I asked about bringing an "elf" into the country. "Elf?" The older customs officer was dazzled. "No," she said in German, "only one." I suddenly understood, as I recalled that "elf" means eleven in German. But I had a precious piece of information: it was legal to bring one garden gnome from Poland into Germany.

An explanation is overdue. I am not the new owner of a garden in Germany, nor have I just discovered the joys of kitsch. I was investigating a serious conflict involving pioneering Polish entrepreneurship on the one hand and national pride of Germans in a traditional craft on the other. As is usual in Polish-German relations, it is difficult to say who started this particular row. Did it begin when Poles discovered that plaster garden gnomes, which are pricey in Germany, can be produced cheaply in Poland? Or was it triggered by German bargain-hunters who invaded Poland by the legions and engaged in garden-gnome shopping sprees? Either way, the Polish-made statuettes of bearded dwarves with ruddy cheeks, green jackets and red pointy caps—half a million of them—have invaded Germany and have brought much displeasure to the traditional local producers.

Garden gnomes, of course, are not the only items on the shopping lists of Germans, who last year made more than 30 million trips across the Oder to Poland to buy half-price cigarettes or cheaper kielbasa for their sauerkraut and who spend some 4 billion German marks there each year. But contraband cigarettes or discounted sausage do not lead to court hearings; gnomes do.

The tradition of gnome-making is a real one. In September 1883 one Philipp Griebel crafted the first tiny figure of terra-cotta. The business flourished undisturbed for a century. Then Poles implanted themselves in the garden ornamentation business. They brought a few gnomes from Germany, forged molds and joyfully launched a gnome-mania of extravagant proportions. In some places near the Oder-Neisse border, it is gnome heaven. Nowa Sól, a town of 43,000 inhabitants has 200 gnome-producing workshops, some of them operating around-the-clock with three shifts. Patent? Trademark protection? "Those German courts will never find out," Poles thought. Little did they know.

Most of the Polish-made gnomes are indeed protected by patents. "The Fisherman," "The Hunter," "The Dreamer with Dear," "Rambo with Gun," "Mushroom-picker" and "The Drunkard" are all trademarks. Today, for example, Philipp Griebel's great-grandson, Günter, holds the right for exclusive production of the highly popular "Maiden's Fright," a two-foot-high critter holding his green jacket wide-open. Thousands of these diminutive flashers expose themselves along all the international roads in Western Poland, selling for the equivalent of $20, compared to the roughly $100 one must pay to take one of their German cousins home. No wonder the German gnome manufacturers saw their livelihoods threatened by such cheap competition, despite the huge demand in the market.

A mere six years ago, garden gnomes were suffering in popularity, with a 39 percent approval rating in Bundesrepublik, according to the Allensbach polling institute, down from a high of 58 percent in 1956. Since reunification, however, the gnomes have regained favor, and the correlation may not be accidental. East Germany's communist leader Walter Ulbricht hated the gnomes—a relic of bourgeoisie—so he simply forbade their production; but his successor, Erich Honecker, realized gnomes were good business, and set up a state-owned enterprise to make them and send them across the Iron Curtain.

But while *Ossi* gnomes in *Wessi* gardens were "*gut,*" Polish gnomes in German gardens are "*nicht gut.*" Eight main German gnome producers—the *gnomenklatura,* if you will—decided to strike back against the Poles. They hired a lawyer, Völker Spitz, who last May presented a Munich court with evidence of crime. Wholesale importation of certain patented gnomes was banned. All German customs officers received "wanted" warrant notices containing color photographs of ten patented garden gnomes. With a vague Germanic giggle, the chief of the customs officer here in Frankfurt showed me one such

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warrant along with a note that read, "Should you see any of these individuals, please inform Dr. Völker." The note included Spitz's phone number.

Now the German gnome makers are trying to gain the attention of the politicians for their cause. At the recent garden gnome exhibition in Frankfurt, the manufacturers displayed gnomes resembling Chancellor Helmut Kohl, his Social Democratic Party challenger Rudolf Scharping, Labor Minister Norbert Blüm (with a shovel in his hand) and Finance Minister Theo Waigel (in Bavarian costume, with empty pockets). Another PR event was a symposium—"Eurognome '94" organized by Günter Griebel and held at his factory in Baden-Württemberg province last month. A featured guest was the octogenarian president of the International Association for the Protection of Garden Gnomes, Fritz Friedmann of Basle, Switzerland. Friedmann delivered a rather embarrassing speech against "limitations to free circulation of gnomes in Europe, which is undergoing unification" and declared that "a real gnome doesn't need lawyers, he can defend himself." Fortunately, Spitz, the gnomists' lawyer, cheered up the participants by announcing that more than 1000 Polish gnomes caught while illegally crossing the border would be destroyed in Frankfurt an der Oder. When I spoke with him last week, Spitz boasted about his latest victory. He had the gnome ban extended to include 150 models and now makes his warrants directly from the producer's catalogue.

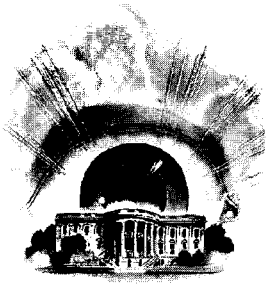
Time was, the Soviet bloc nations traded only among themselves. What Spitz may not know is that a great part of the gnome traffic now goes from Poland to the Czech Republic, where Vietnamese retailers buy them and resell them to Germany. What we may end up with is just a dwarfed version of the old Communist common market. •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BACK AGAIN

By Fred Barnes

It was a luxury President Clinton hasn't experienced often this fall: choosing among invitations to speak for Democratic candidates. True, it wasn't much of a choice. Connecticut Democrats invited Clinton but didn't have the money to pay for a campaign visit by him, his entourage, and Air Force One (taxpayers don't foot the bill for political travel). So Clinton opted to campaign in Rhode Island on November 3 for House candidate Patrick Kennedy, Teddy's son, and other Democrats. Still, it's nice to be wanted. And not just in New England. Three Senate candidates who planned to stay far away from the president suddenly changed their minds and invited him to make late campaign appearances. Clinton showed up at rallies in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia for Senator Harris Wofford on October 31, and the next day spoke for Bob Carr in Michigan and Joel Hyatt in Ohio. These invitations hardly represent a national groundswell for Clinton. After all, the welcome mat was out for him only in the Rust-belt and the West Coast states. But at least it was out there.



The reason wasn't Clinton's charm but his three successes in foreign policy, the four-day photo opportunity in the Middle East and slightly higher poll numbers. His mini-rebound diminished the discomfort Democrats felt in being associated with him. "The whole Republican campaign is based on embarrassing Democrats because they're affiliated with Clinton," says Tony Coelho, the White House political adviser. "But they don't have to be embarrassed," he argues, now that Clinton restored President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power in Haiti, thwarted Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf and reached an agreement on nuclear weapons with North Korea. These were followed by the president's Middle East visit, where he joined the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty. Coelho opposed that trip, by the way. In hindsight, he's chastened. "You put the president on the world stage," says Coelho. "He was the centerpiece. That's what Americans like."

In October alone, the president's approval rating rose from 44 percent to 48 percent (*Time*/CNN poll). Approval of his handling of foreign policy jumped to 59 percent (*Newsweek*). These numbers buoyed the president, but not as much as the response to the poll question that had most alarmed the White House: Is Clinton up to the job? For months, polls found a majority of Americans thought not. The numbers were "really negative," says a Clinton aide. Now the negative/positive ratio has "moved even." That doesn't make Clinton a titan, but it means he's gained a measure of stature.

With foreign policy success has come a new Clinton stump speech. He's added a Leader-of-the-Free-World gloss, dwelling on the contention that America's international clout has been strengthened on his watch. "For the first time since the dawn of nuclear weapons, no Russian missiles are pointed at your children," he declared at the Wofford rally in Pittsburgh. "And we here in the United States have been asked to help brave people all over the world as they struggle for freedom and democracy.... Why do you think these people want us to help? Because they know this is a very great country. And they respect our values, our Constitution, our devotion to democracy, our appreciation of diversity." Oh, yes, the president noted as if an

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afterthought, "They admire our military strength."

The president readily exploited his visit to Egypt, Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan. "It was an incredible trip," he declared at a Detroit rally on November 1. "I saw our fine soldiers in the Persian Gulf standing up for freedom there. I saw the faces of people looking at America, looking to America for support.... They are not cynical about us." Clinton left no foreign breakthrough unmentioned. At a dinner for New York Governor Mario Cuomo on October 19, he told a story about his pal Boris Yeltsin, and segued into mention of Haitians holding signs that said, "THANK YOU, AMERICA."

Absent world events, Clinton would have lots of time on his hands in the run-up to the November 8 elections. There'd have been no marathon campaign swing. As it turned out, Clinton was to spend eight straight days on the road. Some aides urged Clinton not only to tout his own record in stump speeches, but also to slam Republicans on foreign policy grounds for what one Clinton official calls "their knee-jerk opposition" to Clinton moves overseas. "I'd love him to do a Reagan-style, 1984-era speech attacking his opponents for tearing down America," says a White House official. "But he won't go that far." Clinton understands he'd gain little from that. Instead, in addition to the foreign policy content, he packed his speeches with two domestic messages, one for the Perot and swing vote Clinton has failed to woo in the past, the other for Democratic voters, with whom Clinton remains very popular.

He used the Republican "Contract with America" for both purposes. With its tax cuts and new spending for defense and Star Wars, the GOP scheme is fiscally irresponsible, Clinton argues. "It's $1 trillion worth of promises," he said in Philadelphia on October 31. "And you know what will happen? If they get control of the Congress and that's their program, you'll explode the deficit." That was the part aimed at the Perotistas. Then, seeking to stir Democrat turnout, he insists "the Republican contract could devastate Social Security and senior citizens. They'd have to cut Social Security about $2,000 a person a year and Medicare about $1,800 a person a year. That's $3,600 a year [actually $3,800] out of the most vulnerable people in this country.... That is wrong, and we must not allow it to be done." Of course, were it done, that would mean the deficit wouldn't explode. While it's smart politics to accuse the GOP of both profligacy and austerity, it's intellectually dishonest.

Does that matter? Only if Clinton's new stature as a foreign policy president is undercut by domestic demagoguery. The chances his speeches will affect the outcome of the midterm election are slim to none, I'd guess. Still, David Dreyer, the deputy White House communications director, recalls how President Bush dropped domestic issues and talked up Desert Shield in the final week of the 1990 campaign. "When he switched to the foreign policy message, he really did quite a job for his candidates," says Dreyer. Republicans lost a mere eight House seats. Clinton would be glad to settle for a repeat. •

America's secessionist boom.

THE GOODBYE WHIRL

By Paul Roberts

John Stokes, founder of a rural secessionist movement in Snohomish County, Washington, sat in the living room of his large, lake-front log home, smoking cigarettes and describing the revolution. County land-use regulations, he explained, were "communist." Local government was in the hands of environmental extremists. Rural landowners' constitutional rights were being trampled by liberal, big-city bureaucrats. Little wonder that folks in Freedom County, as some here already call the rural, 1,052-square-mile northern half of Snohomish County, were on the verge of revolt. "You can't buy ammunition out here anymore," Stokes warned. "People are hoarding it. They want to be prepared."

Two years ago, when Stokes first floated his proposal for a new, less-regulated government fifty miles north of Seattle, the idea was roundly ridiculed. Although Washington's Constitution allows for political subdivisions, few people here imagined it would ever happen. The state hasn't created a new county since 1912, and Stokes, a glib ex-realtor whose own development plans had run afoul of county wetland regulations, was never convincing as a defender of constitutional principle.

Yet by last January, volunteers had the constitutionally required number of signatures to petition state lawmakers for new-county status, and they plan to do so during the 1995 legislative session. As impressively, allied groups in surrounding areas are agitating to create six more new counties, with names such as "Liberty," "Pioneer" and "Independence." On March 7, secessionists faxed Freedom County's "Proclamation of Freedom" to newspapers around the country. That afternoon, cigarette in hand, Stokes announced, "The fight for America starts right here."

He may be right. Washington's new county movement reflects a development in grass-roots politics nationwide. In 1992, for example, Staten Island residents voted overwhelmingly to secede from New York City. That same year, citizens of Long Island, Maine, irked at rising property taxes, voted to secede from Portland. Last fall, activists in residential West Seattle threatened to leave Seattle proper after the city proposed building several multifamily "urban villages" in their neighborhood. Nine southwest counties in Kansas, along with several neighboring counties in Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas, agitated to become the new state of West Kansas. "Basically, it was taxation without repre-

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sentation," says Bob Boaldin, a West Kansas activist. "We had a constitutional convention and everything." Secessionists also have gained attention in, among other places, South Carolina, California and Massachusetts.

Why is secession fever spreading? In truth, most of these movements arise from genuine political grievances. Backers of Washington's Freedom County, for example, aren't the only ones angered by the state's increasingly prohibitive environmental laws. Staten Islanders assert that the taxes they pay into New York City's general fund dwarf the value of the city services they receive. Proponents of a controversial plan to split California into three states argue that the state is simply too populous and regionally diverse for a single government. And in southwestern Kansas, a land of great mineral and agricultural wealth but comparatively few voters, residents have little say in how that bounty is distributed. "We're not a bunch of rabble-rousers," insists Boaldin, who also heads the local county board of commissioners. "These are honest, hardworking people who feel like they're getting the shaft. "

Stripped of its occasionally zany populist penumbra—Freedom County's Proclamation, for example, declares "devotion to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe" and accuses the state of "embrac[ing] the principles of Marxism and socialism"—the New Secessionists' laments can sound strikingly similar to those of 'legitimate' separatist movements. American revolutionaries and Southern secessionists were moved by oppressive regulation. Basque separatists in Spain declared that "the cow of the state has its mouth in Basque country but its udder elsewhere." Might not the cow of, say, Kansas have its mouth in the rural counties but its udder in Topeka? Allen Buchanan, author of *Secession: Morality of Political Divorce,* argues that secession is about the redistribution of political and economic power. Faced with a tyrannical majority, Buchanan says, secessionists "redraw the boundaries in such a way that they will no longer be the minority."

Sadly, secession these days rarely seems so straightforward. While most of the current rebellions are represented as the "will of the people" against an unresponsive state, they often are promoted most energetically by those few who stand most to gain under the proposed regimes. Freedom County, detractors claim, means freedom primarily for developers and real estate moguls. Critics of the Three-Californias campaign, meanwhile, routinely accuse the movement's leaders of coveting high office in the new governments—governments whose new constitutions, as *The Wall Street Journal* noted last year, "might not include the voter-imposed term limits that will remove all current California officeholders by the year 2000."

More troubling is the fact that today's secessionist "causes" are disputes that, until recently, were handled by vote or legislative debate. In some cases, as Buchanan and others worry, secession has become a fashionable political strategy, a quick fix for complex social conflict. Worse, secession now may be regarded not just as a means to skirt a frustrating political process, but to escape that process and the attendant social obligations altogether. In fact, the New Secessionists don't even need to secede to succeed. "If a minority can now make a credible threat of secession," Buchanan says, "and if the majority sees that as a prohibitive cost, then the majority is likely to knuckle under."

Is secession the new shape of American politics? Fretful state legislators were able to stall breakaway movements in Maine and New York, while West Kansas activists have tabled their secession threat in favor of simply suing the state. But Washington state secessionists are eagerly awaiting the 1995 legislative session. In June 1992, residents in twenty-seven of thirty-one mostly northern California counties voted fifty-four to forty-six in favor of carving up the state, which, backers say, means they can now put the Three-Californias question on a statewide ballot in 1996. Nor is divorce the secessionist's only weapon. Kansas separatists claimed to have helped boot seventeen state senators out of office. In New York City, David Dinkins lost the 1992 mayoral race in large part because conservative Staten Island turned out en masse for the secession vote.

Still, if secession has been hard on the establishment, it's no easier on the rebels themselves. Freedom County's John Stokes reported that he received threatening phone calls, had his mail tampered with, was harassed by county officials and had cars cruise by his home at night with their headlights off. Fellow secessionists also hint at dissension between Stokes and the Freedom County leadership. In any case, shortly after issuing Freedom County's Proclamation, Stokes sold his lake-front home and moved to Montana. State and county officials in Washington were both relieved and immediately suspicious. "I ought to call up those people in Montana," joked one. "Someone has to warn them what's coming their way."

Paul Roberts is a freelance writer in Seattle.

A genius brought down to earth.

EINSTEIN CALLING

By Mark Leyner

We live in an era of rampant debunking and giddy tabloid iconoclasm. Flying the Jolly Roger of egalitarianism, cultural headhunters and lynch mobs scour the canon in search of heroes to lay low. The objective is to demonstrate that each and every luminary in the culture's *Who's Who*—by dint of some moral foible, ethical indis-

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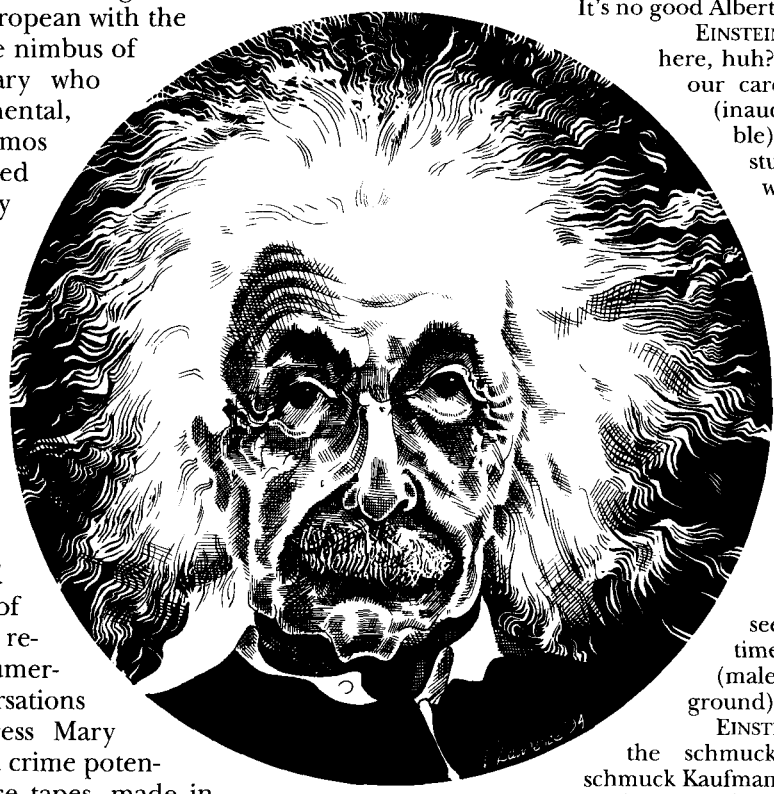
cretion, despicable craving or crypt-ideology—is just like you and me. This is a time of great leveling. We want the genius mainstreamed, the *sui generis* homogenized.

And so, with the guillotine of égalité beheading icon after icon, it should come as no surprise that Albert Einstein, that paragon of genius and intellectual heroism, would finally be ushered from the pantheon and carted off in a tumbrel to the delirious approbation of *sans-culottes* everywhere.

Three recent books—Abraham Pais's *Einstein Lived Here*, Michael White and John Gribbin's *Einstein* and Roger Highfield and Paul Carter's *The Private Lives of Albert Einstein*—show us that the abstrusely brilliant man of gentle humility and moral courage, the wise and generous middle European with the doleful eyes and sibylline nimbus of white hair, the visionary who reshaped our fundamental, conception of the cosmos was in fact a deeply flawed individual governed by a murky ethic and driven by the basest of impulses.



I, for one, accept the veracity of this bracing revision. In fact, I decided to dig a little deeper. And, despite having girded myself for the worst, I was appalled at what I discovered when I availed myself of the Freedom of Information Act and reviewed transcripts of numerous tapped phone conversations Einstein had with actress Mary Astor and with organized crime potentate Meyer Lansky. These tapes, made in the 1930s with an electronic bug placed in the Princeton phone booth from which Einstein did all his "extracurricular" business, reveal an Einstein who was tyrannical, sadistic and venal, a cutthroat, ferociously vindictive intellectual parasite who blithely stole credit for the work of others.

Imagine my shock, for instance, when I perused the following transcribed exchange between Einstein and Astor. (Einstein—whose first marriage to Meleva Maric ended in divorce in 1919, and who later that year married his second cousin Elsa—met the celebrated Hollywood character-actress in 1931 when he was Visiting Professor at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. Einstein's relationship with Astor apparently coincided with Astor's extramarital affair with dramatist George S. Kaufman.)

FILE NUMBER: 2876C-983
LOCATION: Phone booth on the corner of Nassau Street and Murray Place in Princeton, New Jersey.
TIME: September 26, 1935, 8:45 p.m.
PARTICIPANTS: Albert Einstein, Mary Astor

EINSTEIN: When are you going to be finished with the new proposal for circumventing Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle?

ASTOR: Albert (inaudible). I just started shooting a new picture for Mr. Thalberg. How do you expect me...

EINSTEIN: Mary, I don't care about Irving Thalberg. I don't care about his picture. I have a symposium in Zurich in two weeks and they expect a proposal! You know these guys, these nudniks—Planck, Bohr, Schrödinger—these (inaudible), these guys are (inaudible). C'mon here.

ASTOR: Y'know, I don't like this whole arrangement. I conceptualize the warping of time by gravitation, you get the credit. I develop the principle of general covariance, you get the credit. I derive the gravitational field equations that govern the space-time curvature, you get the credit. It's no good Albert. It's no good.

EINSTEIN: Where are we going here, huh? You want to think about our careers here for a second? (inaudible) Your boss (inaudible) Thalberg—that guy's not stupid. You think Thalberg wants Mary Astor, physicist? You think Thalberg wants that? Mary Astor, physicist? You think prestige within the scientific community fills seats in a movie house? If that were true, Thalberg and his fat friend Louie Mayer would sign Madame Curie to a contract. Am I right? (inaudible) I'm just saying that I care about you, O.K.? I love you. You know that.

ASTOR: (Sighs) Let me see if I can squeeze in a little time between takes and I'll ... (male voice is heard in background)

EINSTEIN: Who's that, Mary? Is the schmuck visiting? Is (coughs) schmuck Kaufman paying a little visit, Mary? Is it that piece of garbage Kaufman? Is it, Mary?

ASTOR: Albert...

EINSTEIN: Is he over, Mary? That bum...

ASTOR: Albert, calm down. Yes, George Kaufman is visiting. And he's not a bum. He won a Pulitzer Prize, you know. (inaudible) For *Of Thee I Sing*.

EINSTEIN: A Pulitzer? That's funny, Mary. That's hilarious. This imbecile won a Pulitzer Prize, huh? Liebchen, I won the Nobel Prize in physics, O.K.? (inaudible) You want to compare a Pulitzer for a puppet show or whatever he won it for—you want to compare that to the Nobel Prize in physics? Fine, go ahead.

ASTOR: I'm not comparing, Albert. Anyway, I don't see why you're getting so agitated. George just stopped by to help me rehearse.

EINSTEIN: You think I'm that stupid, Mary? You tell your rehearsal partner to be careful. I've got a friend—an astrophysicist from Bern. You know what an astrophysicist can do to someone's face, Mary? It isn't pretty.

In the following excerpt, we again find Albert Einstein shamelessly exploiting the intellectual toil of his associates. We're also privy to Einstein's eagerness to

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fritter away the precious resources of the Institute for Advanced Study on the felonious gambling enterprises of Meyer Lansky and his cohorts. And finally, we get a fascinating glimpse of the great, culminating project on which Einstein labored for the last quarter-century of his life: the Unified Field Theory.

Lansky, renowned as the Mafia's one-man think tank and the academic *éminence grise* of the syndicate's gambling empire, began his illustrious criminal career bootlegging with Lucky Luciano and Bugsy Siegel. A numerical wizard who did computational puzzles as a form of recreation, he allocated the spoils from smuggled liquor shipments, keeping all the figures in his head. Lansky, according to gangland folklore, was also the inventor of money laundering.

FILE NUMBER: 2951B-992
LOCATION: Phone booth on the corner of Nassau Street and Murray Place in Princeton, New Jersey.
TIME: November 3, 1935, 10:15 a.m.
PARTICIPANTS: Albert Einstein, Meyer Lansky

EINSTEIN: Meyer, did you finish proofing the calculations demonstrating that Maxwell's equations on electromagnetism satisfy the principles of relativity?

LANSKY: They're (inaudible) screwed up. Ah...

EINSTEIN: They're all screwed up?

LANSKY: I'm redoing the whole thing. Don't worry about it.

EINSTEIN: You know what the problem is? (Coughs) I've been distracted by this other theory I've been working on. Meyer, listen to this: "The heartbeat of a person traveling with a velocity close to that of light would be relatively slowed, along with his respiration and all other physiological processes. He would not notice this retardation because his watch would slow down by the same degree. But judged by a stationary timekeeper he would grow old less rapidly." Do you understand?

LANSKY: He'd get younger?

EINSTEIN: Yeah. But do you understand the ramifications?

LANSKY: Ah, no.

EINSTEIN: If we can build airplanes that can travel close to the speed of light, then—let's say, Meyer, you're traveling from Vegas to Havana and then back, O.K.? When you get back, you're going to be younger, and that delicious cigarette girl at the Flamingo is going to be a little older. So now it's not going to be "Mr. Lansky, you remind me so much of my father," it's going to be more like, "Mr. Lansky, I get off in half an hour." Do you know what I'm saying, Meyer?

LANSKY: It's mind-boggling. You really think such a thing is possible?

EINSTEIN: (inaudible)

LANSKY: Albert, you know Charlie, right?

EINSTEIN: Charlie?

LANSKY: Charlie Luciano—my business partner.

EINSTEIN: Oh, Charlie Luciano, yeah.

LANSKY: Well, Charlie and I were wondering if, given the fact that you were able to predict precise deviations in the perihelion motion of Mercury, you might be able to help us out with the Belmont Stakes.

EINSTEIN: Uh ... sure ... yeah. I'll need some information and (inaudible) work up a calculation pretty quickly.

LANSKY: It's 3-year-olds, Albert. They go a mile and a half. Charlie and I feel very strongly about a horse by the name of *Omaha*—he already took the Derby and the Preakness and...

EINSTEIN: All I need is the mass of the horses and the jockeys, O.K.?

LANSKY: The mass? You mean the weight? I think *Omaha*'s carrying about 126 pounds. The weight, right?

EINSTEIN: The mass, Meyer, the mass. It's a measure of an object's inertia, its degree of resistance to being accelerated by a force ... (inaudible) it's a measure of the object's gravitational effect. Do you understand what I'm talking about?

LANSKY: The mass of the horses and the jockeys—yeah, sure. What about baseball, Albert? The Series. (inaudible) And Charlie's curious about the Oscars.

EINSTEIN: Baseball I can do, Meyer, but it's much more complicated. Horses, you got mass and velocity—it's simple. Baseball, elections, Academy Awards—it's a lot more complex. You have more variables. Maybe you have a pitcher who throws a heavy sinker ball, you've got a pull hitter at the plate, men on base—you have to modify all measurements of time and distance according to the velocity of each system of reference, you have to consider the alignment of any massive gravitational bodies, etc. etc. (inaudible) Academy Awards—you've got all sorts of quantum *potentia*. The quantum world consists of tendencies, not actualities. A nominated actress's measured attributes may be determined by events in other galaxies, events from the future...

LANSKY: So what you're trying to say is that the universe is too complex to make book on?

EINSTEIN: No, that's not what I'm saying at all. Look—the universe is like a craps game, O.K., except instead of a Euclidian three-dimensional table, you got a four-dimensional space-time curvature.

LANSKY: I thought you said: "*Gott würfelt nicht*,"—God doesn't play dice.

EINSTEIN: No, Meyer. I said: "God plays dice, it's just that the dice are loaded." You know what I'm saying? The fix is in. That's the Unified Field Theory in a nutshell, my friend.

LANSKY: So this thing ... (inaudible) This thing of ours ... it's gonna last forever?

EINSTEIN: Oh yes, Meyer. *Gott crap out nicht.*

MARK LEYNER is author of the forthcoming *Tooth Imprints on a Corn Dog* (Harmony Books).

A reinventing government triumph.

REGO A GO-GO

By Paul Glastris

With all due respect to Bill Clinton's busy schedule, could he possibly devote a bit of time to a subject that might save his presidency? Fourteen months ago, when Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review (NPR) released its plan to "reinvent" the federal government, Clinton's popularity rating surged 11 points. And it wasn't just voters who loved the idea that the government could be made to "work better and cost less." Among a huge contingent of civil servants down in the bowels of the federal bureaucracy, Gore's report, "From Red Tape to Results," lit a reformist fire. One such bureaucrat was Dean Martell, a 45-year-old manager with the Department of

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Veterans Affairs in Milwaukee. "I couldn't believe the insights," Martell recalls. "I read the report three times and forwarded it to a bunch of my colleagues."

An energetic former Army medic, Martell runs something called the Central Region Contract Service Center, located on the campus of the Clement J. Zablocki Veterans Administration Medical Center in Milwaukee. Opened in the waning days of the Bush administration, the center is home to a pilot program that helps eight Midwestern veterans hospitals do a better job of buying everything from fresh meat to ambulance services. It sounds boring, but it's a critically representative part of the federal government. The V.A. is the largest non-defense agency in the federal government. The Milwaukee service center does what most federal agencies do: it's a contracting agency, buying products and services for a taxpayer-funded institution. It's ground zero for any attempt to really reinvent government. Which is why Dean Martell's enthusiasm matters. If reinventing government works here, the omens are good.

So far, they are. Soon after the Gore report was released, the Milwaukee V.A. and Martell's center were dubbed a "reinvention lab"—one of about 150 scattered throughout the federal government. The labs were promised dispensation from onerous personnel and procurement regulations in order to test the main tenet of the NPR: that government agencies can improve their "service" to "customers" by "empowering" front-line bureaucrats, the way today's best-run companies do their employees. So what happened? I traveled to Milwaukee to find out.

The V.A. center where Dean Martell works is a surprisingly beautiful place, founded just after the Civil War and set amid an Arlington-like forty-nine-acre military cemetery of rolling hills, sprawling oaks and small white gravestones arrayed in perfect straight lines. Martell's Contract Service Center occupies an elegant old French-provincial building that was once a medical domiciliary, with a wide wooden-front veranda upon which one can imagine aging Union soldiers in wheelchairs. Inside, the building has been retrofitted in contemporary back-office style, with blond wood-veneer desks and sound-absorbing nubby fabric on everything.

Martell gave me a tour of the facilities, including a trip to a basement crowded with rows of metal shelves that reached to a low ceiling with exposed pipes. The shelves were lined with plastic three-ring binders. Martell pulled one off the shelf and flipped through a two-inch-thick stack of paper that spelled out the terms of a single contract with a firm to maintain an ultrasound machine. "You never see contracts like this in the private sector," complained Martell, who has a masters degree in hospital administration from NYU: "A lot of vendors won't even bid for V.A. business because they don't want to pay lawyers to read this stuff and tell them what kind of exposure they'd have." (Last month, with little fanfare, Congress passed and the president signed a sweeping overhaul of federal procurement law that should cut substantially the number of pages in such contracts, thereby boosting the number of companies that might want to bid for government business.)

Later, we sat in a conference room with a half-dozen members of Martell's staff. Most were contract officers whose short hair and short-sleeve dress-shirts told of careers spent crunching numbers in federal bureaucracies. There was also the staff lawyer, a sharp, upscale-looking woman in a green silk blouse and finely tailored skirt whose presence on the team seemed a source of pride to the guys. Since the center opened in July 1992, this team slowly has been taking over the contracting responsibilities for eight hospitals in the region. Before that, each hospital had its own small staff of contract officers who dealt directly with vendors, making it impossible for the V.A. to achieve economies of scale by buying in bulk. The hospital-based contract officers were seldom as well-trained or sophisticated as the medical company representatives from whom they were buying. Consequently, the contracts often didn't represent the best possible deals for the hospitals or patients. If a hospital contract officer circulated a proposed contract for review to legal and technical experts at V.A. headquarters, the paperwork would often sit there for months. By creating the Contract Service Center, the V.A. aimed both to centralize and decentralize the process. Experts, like the lawyer, were moved down from Washington, while the contracting work was sent up from the hospitals.

This did not sit well with the hospital-based contract officers who figured, rightly, that their jobs would be eliminated. Soon after the center opened, its staff started getting nasty comments at hospital training sessions and rude E-mail messages from contracting officers at V.A. centers all over the country. It was deeply demoralizing to the staff. Morale picked up when the V.A. chose Milwaukee as a reinvention laboratory and the designation also gave Martell more clout when dealing with others in the V.A. "We're incredibly unpopular within the bureaucracy," he says. "The performance review changed the internal climate. What we're doing here would have had a lot less chance of surviving because the bureaucracy would have dragged its feet much more than it has."

Morale picked up even more when the center's efforts began to bear fruit. For instance, when it came time to renew a contract to service home oxygen equipment, the center's staff interviewed patients and respiratory therapists and found that firms were being paid full price to refill oxygen tanks that only needed to be topped off. The new contract specified that the vendor would be paid only for the oxygen actually used, a change that saved $100,000 a year.

Incremental improvements like this, repeated in contract after contract, soon added up. Martell and his staff documented $2.8 million in savings in less than three years. With payroll and overhead costs of $1 million annually, the center is about breaking even. But that doesn't take into account certain other advantages. Having a lawyer on hand made it less likely that the V.A.

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would be sued (or at least sued successfully) by irate vendors. The contracts are tougher on vendors, but the vendors benefit by dealing with one organization rather than eight. "There's less paperwork, and the paperwork is more efficient," says Homex Healthcare president John Cook, whose firm supplies walkers and wheelchairs to homebound patients. Under Homex's new contract, products can be ordered by fax rather than mail, cutting delivery time to patients. Indeed, surveys of vendors and hospital clinicians show growing "customer satisfaction" with the new regime, says Martell. An evaluation of Martell's center (and three similar ones) is still underway, but preliminary results "validate the efficiency of the regional contracting model," says Chris Figg of the V.A.'s aquisition office.

The regime certainly has been bad for the hospital-based contract officers whose jobs were eliminated. But those cuts have helped the hospitals themselves meet staff reduction targets that are part of a NPR-inspired plan to cut the overall federal workforce by 271,000. (This government-wide downsizing is the one aspect of reinventing government that Clinton does tout.) And not all the contract officers lost jobs. At the V.A. center in North Chicago, contract personnel were redeployed in a larger reorganization to improve the hospital's inventory management system, according to hospital managers. Now, nurses in North Chicago spend less time hoarding bandages and bed linens for fear of running out, and more time tending to patients.

Where's the catch? For all the center's success, Martell still labors under oppressive federal regulations. For instance, if he wants to fill a staff position, he can't just put an ad in the paper. He has to pick from a list of candidates generated by the federal Office of Personnel Management, a list that is usually out of date and filled with less-than-stellar applicants who haven't been snapped up by other employers. The Office of Personnel Management's hold over other agencies' hiring practices was supposed to have been loosened thanks to an NPR-sponsored presidential directive, but for mysterious reasons, that hasn't happened at the V.A. Another regulation prohibits the center from joining purchasing pools that non-V.A. hospitals have formed in order to concentrate their buying power. Even more burdensome is a federal requirement that all contracts expire at the end of the fiscal year on September 30. That rule results in a crushing workload for the center's staff in July, August and September. If the contract end-dates could be staggered and the workload evened out, the staff could do a more careful job with each contract.

Last spring, the Milwaukee V.A. sent requests for waivers from these regulations to V.A. headquarters in Washington. Seven months later, they are still waiting for a response. A mid-level V.A. official explained that the waiver requests have been bouncing around several agency departments, accumulating "comments" from budget and legal experts. Those comments are now being pulled together in "decision memos" that must make their way up several layers of political appointees, a process that could take months. If, as seems likely, some of the waivers require changes in statutory language, then the requests will be sent to the Office of Management and Budget, where the decision will be made whether to forward them to the relevant congressional committees.

Meanwhile, Martell struggles to fend off cynicism among fellow bureaucrats. For a while, he chaired a reinventing government task force made up of colleagues from elsewhere in the V.A. procurement bureaucracy. "They were these seasoned federal guys," says Martell. "They asked me, 'You don't really think this will amount to anything?' And I said 'Sure it will!'" But the longer the waiver requests stagnated, the less there was to talk about at the meetings, and Martell stopped calling them. "I hated to see their told-you-so smiles," he says.

I explained this waiver problem to John Kamensky, deputy director of the National Performance Review, headquartered in Washington. He hadn't heard about the situation in Milwaukee, but he said wasn't surprised. His staff has visited about one-third of the 150 reinvention labs, many of which have had problems securing waivers. "We've found that typically it's headquarters that is blocking innovations," he allowed. "When we hear about problems we try to intervene. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't." But with a staff of forty, there's only so much the NPR can do to put heat on the bureaucracy.

That job falls to the press. Yet aside from the flurry of coverage given to Gore's report last September, reporters and editors have been cavalierly inattentive to the hundreds of reinventing government stories happening all around them. The reason, I think, is that compared to reporting on congressional battles or political campaigns, these reinventing government stories are time-consuming and not particularly fun (believe me).

Bill Clinton seems equally uninterested in one of the genuine successes of his administration so far. Yet if he had paid one-tenth as much attention to reinventing government as to health care reform, he'd be in far better political shape. NPR, after all, is at the heart of what the Clinton administration campaigned for. If Washington can show itself capable of seriously improving its implementation of federal programs, then the public's faith in activist government—the *raison d'être* of the Democratic Party itself—would be immeasurably strengthened, and the cause of do-nothing Gingrichism seriously weakened. Although the evidence suggests that the campaign is slowly succeeding in doing for government what ten years of economic stringency have done for the private sector, the movement will not survive unless the bureaucracies' revanchist forces are kept at bay by public scrutiny. And the press isn't going to pay attention to reinventing government unless the president does.

PAUL GLASTRIS is the Midwest correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*.

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The real source of gridlock.

THE INFERNAL SENATE

By Tom Geoghegan

It was in the 1970s, as a young lawyer, that I began to notice something odd. Democratic presidencies would thin to ashes. Everything President Jimmy Carter wanted seemed to come out of the House of Representatives. Yet nothing ever seemed to emerge from the Senate. Why did the U.S. seem as dysfunctional as a French republic in one of the lower digits? It had something to do with the Senate, but what?

Then it came to me, like a firebell ringing pointlessly in 1789: we don't have majority rule. Of course, when I began to say this to my friends, they would laugh nervously. "You're not serious, are you? You'd abolish the Senate?"

No, not abolish. We're big enough for two Houses.

But as a Democrat, I'd like to see the Senate turn ... republican. With a small "r." The size of a microdot. As the Founders fantasized. We should have a Senate, one person, one vote, like the state senates we have in Wyoming, or Vermont.

We can't raise our wages. We can't get health insurance. No aid to the cities. And why? The Senate votes it down. By a weighted vote, for small-state whites in pickup trucks with gun racks all out there shooting these things down. We have a Louisiana Purchase of Rotten Boroughs, full of Senators who are horse doctors, or in rifle clubs, targeting our bills.

Must our fate be set by these fifty unequal stars? Were the Founders so blasé about giving up majority vote? James Madison, in a secret speech at the Constitutional Convention, was terrified at what might result. He wondered if this new republic would be a true republic. So why did he argue for it in Federalist No. 10? He thought the "balance of faction" would save it. We could make it without "majority rule" because a "majority faction" would be enough. By majority faction he meant small farmers with pitchforks, the "debtor class," the people who owed money and fought the bankers. They would be strong enough, organized enough, to make up for the lack of majority rule.

Sure enough, for years we had the small farmers, and then we had the unions. We had factions strong enough to represent the middle class, the wage earners and the small farmers. We could get along, technically, without majority rule.

But now there are no small farmers. No William Jennings Bryan. No big unions—just a trace of the AFL-CIO. The crisis of our time is not too much "faction," but not enough. There is nothing to "check" the commercial faction, nothing to "balance" its political action committees (PACs). And demographically, the denial of majority rule has gotten much. To Madison, it would have been the ultimate nightmare. We have neither "majority faction," nor "majority rule." So without these two things, the Senate as a minority veto has gone off the rails.

This is what the Founders feared: they wanted a senate, but they also wanted majority rule. In *The First New Nation*, Seymour Martin Lipset wrote that even the Founders who opposed Madison, who wanted equal representation among states, said the Senate was a bad idea. They just didn't think there was any choice. But after Poland, after Prague, after South Africa, don't we have that choice? Aren't we ready for one person, one vote? We could still have half a republic. Why not have five classes of states, based on population, and allocate senators accordingly? At the very least, can't we stop the filibusters and the supermajorities?

Like many kids of the 1960s, I grew up in love with the Senate. I read *Profiles in Courage*. It was the age of William Fulbright and Wayne Morse. It was the Senate that would "Stop the War." It was the Senate, with its tradition of veto and delay, that would appeal to a generation of student princes, wary of the Kennedy fathers who had gotten them into Vietnam. It was after Kent State, when it was hot and malarial, that I first entered the Capitol, and touched the marble as cold as a coffin and knew it was the Senate that would save us.

I began to watch the Senate, and know the "Whales," as people called them. It was a secret pride to know the names of the bigger Whales, like Maggie Magnuson, that no one outside of Washington knew. There was something noble about the Whales, the way they would rise up and land and crash and spout water in the air. Besides, while I was focused on veto and delay, the Senate was passing a lot of laws and spending money.

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Meanwhile, unknown to me, the New Deal, which I took for granted, was starting to unravel. The unions, the "majority faction," were in decline. Senators went off on their own. The lack of majority rule, of one person, one vote, was beginning to show.

By 1977 I was a young lawyer in the Department of Energy. Now, I wanted to see bills *pass*. I was working on the National Energy Plan, and on its five centerpieces and six cornerstones, and I'll be damned if it was not like lugging the Elgin Marbles. As I and the other kids (number crunchers) would haul away, there was no problem in the House. Tip O'Neill, our rich uncle, treated us like family. But the senators would glower: the more blow-dried they looked—like Warren Beatty in *Shampoo*—the more sinister they seemed, like Charles Laughton in *Spartacus*. The senators I loved, such as Harold Hughes of Iowa, left for the ministry, to work with alcoholics.

The big shock to me was to come to Washington and find myself in the desert states. I had never been west of the Mississippi and now for the first time ... there were thirty states west of there. As a greenhorn from the Midwest, I'd had no idea. My God, did each of them have two senators? Thirty states! Sixty men looking like Gary Hart. Now the Senate seemed like a crypt, with a terrible secret: we, the U.S., through the Departments of Energy, Interior and Agriculture, owned most of the thirty states. But the thirty, in turn, each with two senators, had taken title to *us*.

The best view of the Western U.S. today is not from the Rockies, but from the Senate side of Capitol Hill. It's truly awesome. Our western friends live off the U.S. A gold deposit worth $1 billion in Chicago is for sale for $6,000 to them. All of it they get free, thanks to the Mining Act of 1872, which the sixty senators are in D.C. to protect.

And what do they do for us in return? There have never been Rotten Boroughs so rotten. While we in the east give them gold deposits nearly for free, they in return won't even vote to raise our wages, or give us health insurance, or aid our cities. Is that fair?

Nor would they do anything for Carter. I learned a lot about the Senate, because I was supposed to draft bills, little ones, that were not important enough for the energy plan. As a result, I got a lot of chances to lobby.

I read once that Robert Taft the elder carried a copy of the Constitution. Whenever he read a bill, he would pull the Constitution out of his coat, and read it again, to make sure the bill didn't violate any provision. I thought this was charming. In the same way, I used to carry around a copy of the National Energy Plan. For one reason or another, my copy didn't last as long.

Back in the White House, or E.O.B., or the agency, people were always shaking their heads. "There's something the matter with Carter."

"What's wrong with him?"

"He doesn't know the Hill." It always seemed dark outside and none of us knew the Hill.

But in fact, as far as the House went, Carter didn't have to know the Hill. And as far as the Senate went, there was nothing he could do. They already had the Mining Act of 1872. What could Carter, or any Democrat, offer them in return? (Republicans don't have to bother. They don't want to do anything. The only reason they want the White House is that they don't want the Democrats to be there.)

I began to get the sense that every future Democratic presidency would end in disaster. It didn't matter. It could be Clinton, or Gore. The ideas of the Democrats would get smaller and smaller. We would begin to talk about Job Training and about New Paradigms, which are neither new nor paradigms nor relevant to anything at all. Except that they don't have to go through the Senate.

Yet in a moment of madness, when Clinton was elected, I thought I would go back. Friends called each other. "Are you going?" The whole thing was fantasy, as I was too old. It would have been like volunteering for the Gulf war. I also didn't want to be there for that moment when we would turn on Clinton and devour him. I couldn't forget what had happened to Carter in the Senate. Clinton might survive for a few weeks as a Republican ... but as soon as he turned Democrat the whole administration would be crushed in the Senate, like the Cataline conspiracy.

In fact, the minority rule had gotten worse. In the Carter era, it took only forty-five or fifty votes to pass a bill. Now it took at least sixty. The filibuster, "reformed," was much easier to use. Everything now seems to get a filibuster, while once it had been a rare event. Unlike the Carter era, the White House does not know, in advance, how many votes it needs to pass a bill. Does it take sixty, a super-majority, or forty-five or fifty? The rule is that there is no rule. A Dole, or a Gramm, can decide at any time.

What other country in the world can say this? Imagine Belarus going to the World Bank and saying: "In our country, we don't know how many votes it takes to pass a bill."

Except, of course, after this Congress, we really do know: anything that helps working people, or the cities, will take a super-majority of sixty votes. Recently, a group called "Action Not Gridlock" mailed me a list of filibusters, on a computer printout. It was like a spreadsheet of our decline in the 1980s. It seemed to hit every bill that would stop the fall of people's wages: striker replacement, family leave, appointments to the National Labor Relations Board. Now in the Clinton era, the list expanded to cities, minorities and the poor. Everything got a filibuster. Everything took sixty votes, and Wyoming, Utah, etc., which used to control just mountains and minerals, now extended their powers over the cities. It was like a new Constitution. It was frightening. Aghast, the left responded by psychoanalyzing Clinton's mother.

One night last June, I couldn't sleep, and so I finally stayed up to do the numbers. Actually, I had not made a list of the states since I was in the fourth grade with

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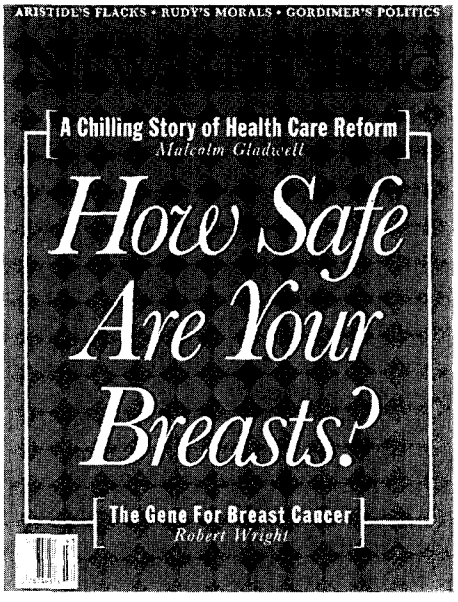
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COMMENTARY, THE ARTS, POLITICS AND ANALYSIS, GOVERNMENT...AND OPINION, FOREIGN AFFAIRS...

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Mrs. Schoenling. Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas ... how many people did they really have? At some level I didn't want to know. Here are some of the numbers that ought to keep you up at night:

• The forty senators from the twenty smallest states represent a population base of 10 percent! In the Clinton era, this means even senators who represent 90 percent of the population are not enough by themselves to pass a bill. In the worst case lineup, a mere 10 percent of the population base could be enough to block a bill.

• The fifty senators from the twenty-five smallest states represent a population base of 16 percent. In the same worst case, senators representing just more than 16 percent of the population base could be enough to block a bill.

• Think of what they can *pass*. The sixty senators from the thirty smallest states represent a population base of only 24 percent. Yet senators representing 24 percent of the population have sixty votes. They can bring back the death penalty for sheep-stealing.

Hasn't it always been this bad?

No. In 1789, when the first Senate was sworn in, there were eighteen states, five newly admitted. The senators from the nine smallest states still represented 33 percent of the population. And there was no filibuster. So back then, to block a bill, it took senators representing a population base of 33 percent. Now, in the worst case lineup, it is merely 10 percent. One could also hope that in time the five new states would fill up. In 1789 they were practically empty (although back then, states like New York were pretty empty, too).

But Madison still fretted. He feared that with each passing decade the imbalance would get worse. And while it is hard to imagine one worse than now, that may be about to happen. It is now clear that in the next century the U.S. will become a multiracial society unlike anything in our past. By some official estimates, the non-Hispanic white population could drop to 72 percent in the year 2000 and to 60 percent in the year 2030. The new minorities, however, will live overwhelmingly in a handful of big states. By the year 2020, five states, including California, Texas and Florida, will have more than 70 percent of the country's Hispanic population. Five states will have nearly two-thirds of the growing Asian population. In this new multiracial America, the big-state minorities individually will have even less voting power than they do now. The vote of each such person (e.g. not New York's but each New Yorker's) will count for substantially less. As the U.S. becomes more multi-racial and stranger to the people-of-the-interior, the non-Hispanic whites in most of the small states will get more and more heavily weighted votes. Talk radio will get louder. The "new ideas" will get smaller. We may be way past gridlock, and heading into something worse.

How can we go to one person, one vote, when a "republic" like ours has never had it before? Let us turn to some of the barroom objections:

1. "Come on, the Democrats control both houses of Congress, so why can't they get anything through?" This is what I have been hearing from the college freshmen. "Why isn't there party discipline, blah, blah, blah...?"

Remember the ninety/ten split, which can block any bill? To be in control of the Senate, the Democrats have to get, in worst case, ninety-one/nine. To win the presidency, or the House, so what? That's just majority rule. To win the Senate, they must go beyond, way beyond, to the very length and breadth of the whole gridlock archipelago. They have to represent what the Senate represents: small states, Republicans, desert, PACs. Majority rule is just the start. The Democrats' "national" party and its "Senate party" have to colonize different worlds.

This is not an era of good feelings. To be a real majority party and still be worth a damn, is it ethical to try to win the ninety/ten game? Is it ethical for the Democrats to win a Senate seat in Utah? There is no chance for a coherent party, not to mention party discipline, until there is one person, one vote in both houses of Congress.

2. "But what's so great about majority rule? Isn't the Senate supposed to be the 'Council of the Wise?' "

There is a case against majority rule. In eighteenth-century Britain, Hugh Walpole and his machine came up with a reason, even a bad reason, for violating one person, one vote: "We're giving votes to people of a better sort."

But what's our excuse? We're getting senators who are not exactly William Pitt or Edmund Burke. It's not that I think our small-state senators are less deserving, but why them? I don't get it.

Besides, next to the House, is the Senate still the "Council of the Wise"? It's not the House where they stand up and sing "Old MacDonald" on national T.V. "It's the reverse of what the Founders expected," said a public-interest type who worked on the crime bill. "It's the Senate where they went wild voting everything into a crime." The forces of good had to say, "Wait, wait, we'll fix it in the House." It's the House that's our last desperate check now on the wildness of the Senate mob.

3. "But this is what the Founders wanted, we shouldn't touch it."

I often wish the Founders were back, those legal mechanics, who could take our Constitution, put it up on the skids and look under it like a car. By accident, I picked up this summer an old Mentor paperback, *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates*. It was like tuning in to "Car Talk." First, I read Madison, and saw his anguish. Then I flipped to Brutus, the Federal Farmer, and the big surprise, Patrick Henry, who I thought was by then dead. This is the Henry we don't let our little children read. He lives in these pages, and at times, I'm ready to drop my pen and sign up as his amanuensis, at least when he says:

> (T)he smallest States that do not collectively contain one-tenth part of the population ... may obstruct the most salutary and necessary amendments.... It is, Sir, a most fearful

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Going Down the Drain

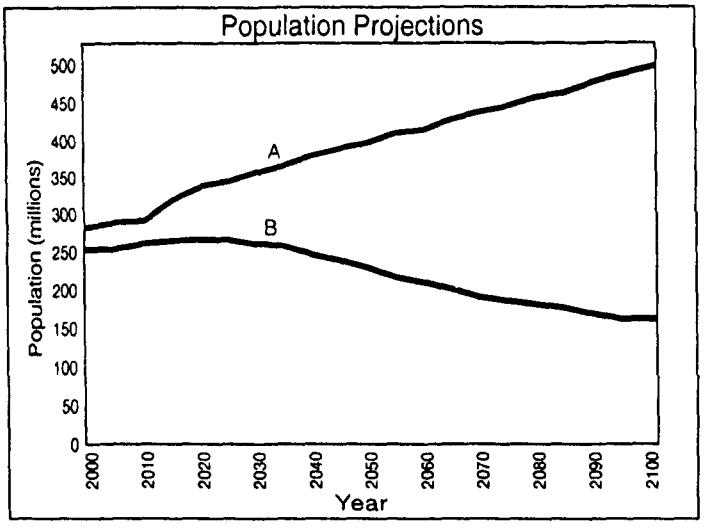
That headline may not be scholarly, and the tone is perhaps too flippant for a deadly serious matter. Still, it would be hard to find a more apt description of where our country is heading as a direct result of the relentless growth of our population.

The arguments for first halting, then reversing, U.S. population growth would seem so compelling as to raise the question "Why isn't it being done?".

Line A shows where our population is headed with current levels of fertility and immigration— to nearly 400 million by 2050, and to nearly a half billion by the end of the next century!

Such population growth would surely lead to disaster for future generations of Americans. It would have profound impacts upon the environment, on renewable resources like farmland, forests and water, and on our society itself.

A smaller population would help the nation deal with the social, environmental and resource problems that confront us, yet very few of our politicians and pundits even consider the idea.



On the assumption that they are held back by unwarranted fears, we will try to explain briefly by what relatively gentle adjustments we could turn U.S. population growth around.

Line B shows what could be achieved with the "two child family" and with immigration reduced to the levels that prevailed for much of this century.

If parents indeed "stop at two" it would lead to a total fertility rate (TFR) of about 1.5 children, because not all women have children, and some have only one. A national TFR of 1.5 would make possible a gradual turnaround in the population growth that drives our social and environmental problems.

We Need to Reduce Immigration

But the two child family alone will not enable the nation to reach a smaller population size. It would need to be accompanied by a substantial reduction in current levels of immigration.

In 1900 we were a nation of less than 76 million. Almost half of the population increase since then has been post-1900 immigrants and their descendants. The Census Bureau projects that our present population of some 260 million will increase by 2050 to 392 million (middle projection), or even to 522 million (high projection).

Of the population growth anticipated for the 21st century, nearly 90 percent will be post-2000 immigrants and their descendants. In other words, immigration is the driving force behind a disastrous surge of population growth.

The average annual level of recorded gross immigration from 1924 through the 1960s was 198,000. Immigration is now over a million per year. If we were willing to bring net immigration down to 200,000 a year, our demographic future would improve dramatically.

If we moved now to the "two child family" and concurrently brought immigration under control at an annual level of 200,000, it would lead in the next century to the population projection shown in the graph *(Line B)*.

By the middle of the next century parents could even be encouraged to have more children, for a total fertility rate of 1.9. That rate would allow our nation to maintain a constant population size of around 150 million.

If, at the same time, we change our lifestyles to reduce unnecessary consumption, and use energy and materials far more efficiently, such a population size should be sustainable for the very long term.

The Choice Is Ours

We need to choose the path leading to a sustainable U.S. population of around 150 million. To get there we would need the combination of the two child family and a moderate net immigration of 200,000 a year. What would be so difficult about that?

We need, above all, the courage to make now the decisions that would safeguard our demographic future. We urge Third World nations to bite the bullet and face up to their demographic problems. How about doing it ourselves?

by Donald Mann, President

NPG is a nonprofit, national membership organization established in 1972. Contributions to NPG are tax deductible to the extent the law allows.

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situation when the most contemptible minority can prevent the alteration of the most oppressive government..."

True, he is speaking of constitutional amendments, but doesn't it apply to the Senate, too? Henry saw the day—our day—when "one-tenth" of the population base would be enough to block us all. I stopped reading, and gasped. I felt like Winston Smith in *1984* when he comes across a scrap of history, real history, that the authorities did not destroy.

4. "The fact is that majority rule won't help the Democrats. Look at Al D'Amato, singing 'Ee-yi, ee-yi, yo....' It's the culture of the country, it's more conservative..."

Not quite. Because we don't have majority rule, who knows what the culture of the country would be like? Even when people rail about the welfare state, what does that mean? Since it can't get through the Senate, no one knows what it would be. The Senate has a built-in bias for constructing fifty huge, wasteful, duplicative state governments, as big as nation-states. In a sense, people in the U.S. (compared with Europe) really *are* over-taxed. If only we could take all the salaries of state and local officials and turn them into transfer payments ...

5. "But isn't it good to represent regions? Other countries do that."

Doesn't Spain represent the Basques, etc.? But don't we do the reverse? The Basques aren't a region, they're an ethnic group. We take our ethnic minorities, our Basques, our Azerbaijanis, and slam them into the big states, such as New York and California, where no one can hear them. It's the Basque-type minority that our Senate is set up, almost fiendishly, to shut out. You don't have to be crazy about multiculturalism to ask, "Why go on giving weighted votes to white people?"

What amazes me is that the people in Wyoming aren't even happy. They sit in their trucks and moan about the federal government meddling in their right to rip off the rest of us for billions in gold. What caste system ever gave such power, such rubied treasures, as the U.S. Senate bestows upon them, and what do they do but whine?

That's what we get by representing these so-called "regions." Represent *their* regions? They have near-veto power over our central cities. It's power, without responsibilities, and the rest of us are the Third Estate. And it's so skewed, people stop voting. Why register the blacks, the Latinos, the poor? Why expand your base? In the end we can exert our influence over only so many senators, only so much majority rule. Without even knowing why, we ultimately get the point that there's no point in registering. When this effect hits, even an Alfonse D'Amato can start winning in the big states.

6. "Look at history. Our Constitution has worked, and the Senate has served us *well*."

Like when it gave us Antietam, Gettysburg ... and that's when the Senate was functioning smoothly.

Every crisis in U.S. history blew up because of the Senate. After all, the Senate virtually created the Civil War. By representing states and not people, it kept the slavery issue permanently on the boil. For each free state, there was a slave state, so the Senate could be fifty-fifty. We had one bloody Kansas after another, then the big bloodbath. With one person, one vote, slavery might have withered away. Thank the Senate for segregation, too. We couldn't even pass a bill to stop the lynching of blacks. Finally, the Supreme Court stepped in with *Brown* v. *Board of Education.*

The list goes on. The energy deadlock? It would have been impossible without the Senate. We had producer states v. consumer states, the crisis ticked on, as we watched in horror, waiting for Iran to blow. Falling wages? Blame the Senate. We would've had labor-law reform twice. There would still be a union movement. We could have kept, in real terms, our minimum wage.

Of course, there was the New Deal: Social Security, the Wagner Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act. But think of all the bills from FDR's Hundred Days that were struck down as unconstitutional. Worse, by Roosevelt's second term, he was being treated in the Senate as if he were Jimmy Carter. Senators like Carter Glass took apart his banking bill. They made a mockery of his minimum wage bill. Roosevelt, like Clinton, would call just about anything a victory. Hundreds of New Deal bills died.

Yet it did work sort of, didn't it? Didn't the New Deal have half a moment of Camelot even without majority rule? To figure out why the Senate worked, sometimes worked, even without majority rule, we have to read Madison in Federalist No. 10. What would save us, Madison said, in sentences as misshapen as in the poetry of Yeats, would be a Senate and a House, in which there was a "balance of faction."

Now it seems to us we have faction enough. But by faction Madison does not mean interest group. He is not talking about the National Rifle Association or Mothers Against Drunk Driving. For Madison, there is only one issue that matters, and that is *inflation.* By faction, then, he means the low-wage crowd who don't mind inflation, and the business people who do. All Madison cares about is monetary policy, fiscal policy and "industrial policy" (yes, he uses the term).

In Madison's mind, there were only two factions: (a) farmers with pitchforks, Shay's mob, the debtors who controlled Rhode Island, and (b) the businessmen, the rich sea captains in Boston. Rhode Island would represent the have-nots. New York would represent the haves.

Even in a senate without majority rule there could still be a balance of these organized factions. But here is the odd part. Madison assumed the have-nots would *always* be organized like the farmers in Rhode Island. As Madison makes clear again and again, this will always be the "majority faction." Thus, he could justify

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the departure from majority rule. "If faction consists of less than a majority," he wrote, "relief is supplied by the republican principle."

In the Senate, however, there is no "republican principle." Madison was aware of that. So what would check the minority faction there? Even in the Senate Madison seemed to assume there would be at least some "balance of faction." It would mimic the republican principle to some extent. But what if, one day, the "majority faction" of small farmers did not exist? What, then, would check and balance the minority faction? It couldn't be the republican principle, not in the Senate, because the republican principle didn't exist.

Of course, for 150 years, even in the Western states, the small farmers did exist. We had Burton Wheeler, George Norris, radical measures (women got the right to vote, it was the only way to get them out there). Then came the labor unions in the 1930s. The New Deal got a coincidental lucky rise of two (!) "have-not" producer groups: the small farmers, as organized as in the days of Madison, especially in the rural states; and the labor unions, newly organized, especially in the industrial states.

The Democrats seem so weak, even when they are the majority party, because the producer groups no longer exist. There are no small farmers in the Western states. There are no labor unions anywhere at all. There is no one who can discipline the Democrats as a Senate party. There are no have-not factions with clout. There is no republican principle. There is no machinery-of-faction to take up the slack. In the most recent session, there were enough Democrats in the Senate. But on issues like health insurance, there was no "labor" to bargain with "business." In an age of corporate PACs, there is no one up there to cut a deal.

7. "This is idiocy, to talk of majority rule. Why would the small states ever permit it?"

It's one thing to take no action. It's another not even to know the problem. Blacks in South Africa have one person, one vote. Might the new multiracial America give it some thought? At least people would know what was wrong, and *that* knowledge might have its own dynamic.

Right now, some American black leaders are obsessed with creating minority districts. The idea is to get around *Shaw* v. *Reno,* and to get more black representatives into the House. But who benefits? Why do blacks in the U.S. need more minority politics? No group is more in need of the changes we could get from a little dash of majority rule. What point is there in pumping up the Black Caucus in the House if everything gets shut down in the Senate? Some time back, I asked an ACLU lawyer about challenging the legality of the Senate filibuster, which has robbed minorities again and again.

"How can we do that?" he said. "Right now, we're trying to argue now for more minority voting rights."

And what about the white populists? I cannot grasp what Kevin Phillips is up to in *Arrogant Capital.* The way to make Washington more responsive to the people is to do the following: have more direct referendums and move the Interior Department to St. Louis. What would this accomplish? At best, it would only corrupt St. Louis. If Phillips wants government to be responsive, why not one person, one vote? Before we have direct democracy, why not entertain the idea (just as an *idea*) of *representative* government as Madison would have defined it?

But how to change it? It seems naïve. "Oh, I don't know," one of my elders muttered darkly. "Maybe one day the Supreme Court will declare it unconstitutional or something." Gee, I don't think so, but what do I know? But the people who laugh or nervously giggle may be naïve themselves. Demography is destiny. The new multiracial U.S. will push us toward majority rule. We have no choice. Structurally, one or the other, the Senate or this new U.S., will have to go.

We need not have pure majority rule. We could divide the states up into five different classes: Class IV states would get four senators, Class III states would get three, etc.

How do we get the little states to agree? Well, we could call on Colin Powell. That's what Madison did with George Washington. We could go off to Philadelphia and meet in secret. Read Montesquieu, like the Founders did, and blind ourselves with wood alcohol, and come up with a rewrite of the "Virginia Plan," which called for one person, one vote, and release it on a slow news day. Or skip the convention. Maybe just a two-part amendment: majority rule for the Senate; and a special exception for adopting this amendment. The exception? If states containing three-quarters of the population approve, the classes go into effect. Then we just need California's votes and twelve or thirteen others.

Well, wouldn't Wyoming, North Dakota leave the union in a huff? Seriously, though, where are they going to go? This underscores the absurdity of keeping up this denial of majority rule. Do you think they could get funding from the IMF? To begin with, they don't even own their own land. If the U.S. took back what belongs to it, some of those states would look like the Gaza Strip. In this light, one basis for settlement is land-for-peace. We could trade mineral rights for Senate seats. We could lock in the Mining Act of 1872.

Thomas Jefferson used to moan to Madison, and to others, that they had cheated generations to come: he and Madison had cheated them of the pleasure, the aesthetic pleasure, of creating a new republic, coming together to do something new. For once in our lives, we could all come together and then pair off into cafés, after a little foreplay in the public square. But no, Jefferson said, future generations in America would never know what this was like. Every generation, after his, would be Generation X.

But maybe in secret a new country is coming of age. It might please Jefferson, and God knows Madison, that we may have to do something new. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Office Hours

David Mamet dazzles. Here are a few selections from his crowded career (and he's not yet 50). Film: *House of Games*, which he wrote and directed; the screenplays of *The Verdict* and of *Hoffa*. Theater: *The Water Engine, American Buffalo, Glengarry Glen Ross, The Shawl, Speed the Plow*, a version of *Uncle Vanya* (now filmed, reviewed here two weeks ago). He has published books of essays, and his first novel has just appeared. He has taught acting in several universities.

His plays and his original screenplays differ in style and intent, but most of them share some characteristics: a sense of life as tangle, of truth as prismatic and mercurial, of secrecy and deception as contemporary dynamics. Now a change arrives. His most hotly discussed play—recently filmed—has almost none of these qualities. **Oleanna** (Samuel Goldwyn) is a two-character work about a 40ish university professor and a female student, which tackles the subject of male attitudes toward women, of women's changing attitudes toward themselves. It is much leaner, more two-dimensional, more argumentative than most of Mamet.

Possibly this was inevitable because *Oleanna* attempts to deal with concrete social ideas. Perhaps, too, that's why he stripped his characters of the mysterious or quasi-mythical qualities that often attend his people. But if he did indeed tell himself that he had to put aside his characteristic art in order to do this job, he paid a price for the choice.

I saw *Oleanna* last year on stage and much admired Mamet's courage in confronting this thorny issue—one that's complicated both by oppressive tradition and bumptious innovation. But the play left me uncertain, distanced. I hadn't expected a "solution," but I had expected to be more greatly involved. Now the film medium has done ruthlessly to *Oleanna* what it often has done to other plays. This film, directed by Mamet himself, exposes what was ungainly in the play.

Let's look first at the writing, and we might as well begin with the title. As epigraph, Mamet quotes a folk song in which Oleanna is a place where the singer would rather be than "be bound in Norway / and drag the chains of slavery." I'm in no position to say that Mamet invented the song because he liked the sound of the name, but I dare to question the title's relevance. It's no more relevant than *Speed the Plow* is to a play about the pyrotechnics of Hollywood deal-making.

Unlike the earlier play, however, this fancy title is the only non-prosy element in *Oleanna*. At the start, the student, Carol, comes to the office of John, a professor of education. She has read his book, which is the text of his course, but she can't understand what is happening in class, and she thinks she is failing. He is the one with power; she is the supplicant. The play's action, over several days, brings about a reversal of positions: at the end John needs Carol's help. Her persistence in her feminist views, as a base for her relations with this professor, her corkscrewing into his code of male acceptances, her newly realized insights about the (often unconscious) chivvying and patronizing of women, eventually unsettle John drastically—a man who had thought he was decently behaved and who finds that the social territory in which he has lived is slipping under his feet.

A highly promising subject for a play. But from the start Mamet loads his characters with broken dialogue that does nothing but impede character and thematic development. It seems an attempt to give these people familiar Mamet verism but without the inner counterpoints that so often take his dialogue past stenography into revelation. From the opening scene of *Oleanna*:

> John: Don't you think...?
> Carol: ... don't I think...?
> John: Mmm?
> Carol: ... did I...?
> John: ... what?
> Carol: Did ... did I ... did I say something wr...

John hasn't interrupted her; there's a pause before he replies.

Now, since this kind of writing seems inflicted on the characters, rather than internally generated by them, we're made to feel that Mamet is uneasy in this new territory, that he must "Mametize" what otherwise might have been pungent straight dialogue. Thus, from the very beginning, the dialogue itself suggests that the author is ill at ease.

Oleanna suffers, too, from distention. Mamet had here the material of a substantial one-act play in three scenes, but he wanted more bulk to provide more

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Browning Version. *See some fine acting by Albert Finney and others in this familiar piece about an English schoolmaster, here given a sweetened ending. (Reviewed 10/31/94)* **Hoop Dreams.** *The high school years of two black Chicago basketball aspirants followed in an emphatic, perceptive documentary. (10/17/94)* **Pulp Fiction.** *No picture could live up to the hype given Quentin Tarantino's murder epic. However, he does have energy and humor and is worth taking account of. (11/14/94)* **Vanya on 42nd Street.** *Exceptionally beautiful. A run-through "rehearsal" of "Uncle Vanya" by some actors, who have been rehearsing off and on for five years under André Gregory. A unique treasure. (11/7/94)*—**SK**

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sense of the passage of time and possibly for practical reasons of theater production. (A long one-act play is, pragmatically, a bit of a white elephant.) So throughout the play, he braided long telephone conversations for John with his wife and his lawyer about the possible purchase of a house to celebrate his expected promotion to tenure. The telephone has long been suspect as a dramaturgic device, and it rarely has been used so blatantly to pad and to vary.

The prospective purchase of that house and the real estate agent's pressure might have made a good accompaniment to the onstage action if Mamet hadn't used them so baldly. (Worse, at the one moment in the play when Carol reaches a point of self-revelation—"I have never told anyone this"—the phone interrupts her, and John goes into still another long phone aria. Her story is never resumed, which makes us think that Mamet is teasing: he didn't really know what Carol was going to say.)

Other bothersome matters. Early in the play John quotes a wisecrack about copulation so obviously out of character that it seems thumpingly planted for Carol's later accusation of abuse. Later, when she is about to leave, John grabs her by the shoulders and forces her to sit, an action that is extremely hard for us to believe—again a plant for later citation. And John's closing explosion, which finishes the story and him, comes after another phone talk with his wife in which he calls her "baby" a couple of times. When he hangs up, Carol tells him not to call his wife baby. This ignites him. I could believe her noting to John that he had used the word but not her ordering him to stop it. It's another contrived provocation. Add further that Carol, who in the early scenes had to ask for definitions of some common words, becomes competently articulate when Mamet needs her to be so.

Several commentators have said that *Oleanna* forces us to take sides. Exception, please. I felt tugs of sympathy for both characters from time to time, but the blunt mechanics of the work intruded between me and conviction either way. *Oleanna* seems to me a chunk of ore that needed greater refinement. Mamet, I'd say, needed to live longer with this idea before he began to write.

His direction of the film gives it some suppleness of movement without egregiously "opening up" a theater work. Debra Eisenstadt has more color as Carol than Rebecca Pidgeon had in the New York stage production. W. H. Macy repeats his theater performance as John. Mamet is devoted to Macy and often has used him in plays and films. This devotion may be understandable as friendship but not otherwise. Macy is a modestly adequate actor without distinction of face or voice or presence. He seems born for secondary roles at best and is out of place in larger ones—especially when he is half the cast.

Pidgeon, who is Mrs. Mamet, wrote some old-timey songs for the soundtrack, and Mamet supplied old-timey schoolsong lyrics. Their intended satire on the action before us is only mildly helpful. •

The restless art of Robert Frank.

Spirit and Taste

By Luc Sante

The retrospective was once, not that long ago, the art world's equivalent of a retirement ceremony, the catalog its gold watch. Things have changed somewhat in recent times, especially since the overheated 1980s, so that tyros of all sizes now seem to be accorded retrospectives at five-year intervals. Still, enough of the old echoes persist that it feels a bit odd to witness the summation of Robert Frank's career currently on view at the National Gallery (and set to travel around the world over the next year and a half).

Frank, who turns 70 in November, has shown no sign of attaining either stasis or the pallor of respectability. He has worked hard, over the course of a fifty-year career, to forestall either occurrence, reinventing himself continuously, dropping large caesuras into his chronology, maintaining an ambivalent and often prickly relationship with his work of the past. Some of this restlessness is that of the mercurial and driven artist who wants to avoid becoming a self-replica, and some of it derives from his struggle to evade the living death imposed by merchandising, to which photographers are especially vulnerable these days. The fugitive, spare, sometimes bitter, often bleak photographic images that made up his collection *The Americans* (1958) were first ignored, then reviled, and now they have become icons. It is not too difficult to imagine the industry, had he permitted it, that would have seen them endlessly reproduced as posters, notecards and calendars.

Instead Frank stopped taking still photographs altogether in the early 1960s, just when notoriety loomed largest, and devoted himself to making decidedly uncommercial motion pictures. When in the 1970s he resumed making the sort of pictures that actually could be hung in a room, they took the form of messy assemblages of photographs with words scrawled on them, the photos themselves unyielding landscapes or intractably private documents. He photographed his own classic images hung from a clothesline over a scraggly dune like so many underpants (*Mabou, Nova Scotia*, 1977), and even drilled holes through a stack of his vintage prints and baled them with wire, hanging the result on a board in tandem with a ragged patch of thermal-transfer prints that would immediately begin to fade away to nothingness (*Untitled*, 1989).

Robert Frank: Moving Out
The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
October 2-December 31, 1994

Robert Frank: Moving Out
by Sarah Greenough,
Philip Brookman, W.S. DiPiero
(The National Gallery of Art/SCALO, 335 pp., $60)

But that work is actually not the auto-da-fé that it might at first seem. Frank's gesture of refusal itself includes self-reference and thus self-perpetuation (and entwined self-mockery and self-pity round out the series, since the top image in the stack is his 1952 picture of a bull with a matador's saber protruding from between its shoulder blades, into whose bleeding carcass Frank has now driven another puncture). And, for all the vehemence of the piece, it shows that Frank is quite incapable of being unaesthetic.

Thus, while Frank remains both vital in his invention and uncompromising in his stance, the retrospective actually accomplishes what a retrospective should: it presents the whole sweep of his work to date, and it demonstrates with no apparent strain just how continuous it has been, all appearances to the contrary. From the earliest item in the show, dated 1941-47, to the latest, from 1993,

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there is an unmistakable through-line: this artist always has been concerned with series (both temporal extremes are represented by sets of photos mounted in a grid), with transient states and fleeting occurrences, with motion and imbalance, with the poetic qualities of obtruding words, with the friction produced by diverse pictures cohabiting a space, with the beauty of the unbeautiful, with the determination that nothing is ever finished. And the more Frank has seemingly turned himself upside down, to prevent mildew or to stump experts and investors, the more he has remained true to himself.

Frank was born in Zurich to a Swiss mother and a German-Jewish father who had never changed his nationality, so that Frank and his brother Manfred were also German citizens—until 1941, when Hitler revoked the citizenships of all Jews, and they became stateless. The insular Swiss eventually naturalized them, but for four years Frank's status prevented him from formally studying photography or earning a living of any kind. Fortunately, his parents were relatively prosperous, and so he was able to serve unpaid apprenticeships with a series of photographers, who instilled in him both the aestheti of straight photography and a Swiss sense of organization. Among the manifestations of the latter were the practice of mounting contact prints in grids on cards filed according to subject, and that of making presentation books of prints mounted one to a page—both conventions that Frank was to adapt and exploit throughout his career.

He arrived in the United States early in 1947 and within two months had met the legendary photographer, art director and impresario Alexey Brodovitch, who hired him for *Harper's Bazaar*. But the routine clashed with Frank's temperament, and he only stuck it out for six months. Even then, he could not have failed to notice that he was walking away from a golden career avenue. Brodovitch's discoveries, who in the same period included Irving Penn and Richard Avedon, made real money in the fashion magazines while being granted the latitude to develop personal styles. Frank characteristically took the stonier path. For the next six years or so—in the middle of which he married and fathered a son—he traveled extensively, in Peru and Bolivia and throughout Europe. The pictures from this period show a style in the making, absorbing and reflecting the work of the past and of its time, and gradually shedding borrowed clothing. Some of these pictures are exceptionally beautiful without necessarily revealing a fully fledged personality: the haunting photograph taken in London in 1952-53, for example, which juxtaposes a little girl running down the street away from the lens with the open door of a parked hearse—the image of a soul in flight—is aphoristic in a way that Frank would thereafter avoid. Among the South American pictures are many dynamic configurations of hats set against dramatically stark vistas, somehow expressing at once a formal polish that Frank would soon jettison and a tense raggedness that would evolve into one of his hallmarks.

Such work would have been sufficient to anyone's mature style of the period—you can see it in how smoothly Frank's journeyman pictures fit into *The Family of Man*, Edward Steichen's mammoth Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1955, and in its spinoff, the largest-selling book of photographs of all time. That exercise in subordinating individual expression to a collective quilt-work in the name of a reassuringly bland humanism takes in everything from superior journalistic manipulation to uncomfortable genius, and wedges them all together, up to eight photos per smallish page. Frank has seven pictures in the book, holding their own beside Dorothea Lange and Manuel Alvarez Bravo, and clearly not the work of just any agency employee, without being exceptionally distinctive, either. (Unless I am greatly mistaken, the young Frank himself appears, possibly with his first wife, in a Louis Faurer portrait on page 9, within the "young lovers" rubric.)

Courtesy of Robert Frank

LONDON, 1952-1953

Where Frank can most clearly be seen becoming himself is in his self-produced books. The retrospective includes two spreads from *Mary's Book* (1949-50), a single-copy love letter to his future wife, consisting of many tiny pictures from his European voyages interspersed with airy texts on 9- by 7-square-inch pages. The pictures and their layout are exquisite. One spread is made up entirely of shots of chairs in Paris parks, and one of them—a solitary, partly folded-up chair that seems as timid as a fawn learning to walk—is about as expressive as a depiction of mere furniture could hope to be.

The show at the National Gallery also displays (in frames) three sequences from *Black and White and Things*, which was published in an edition of three in 1952. This is a tough-minded work in which the formal and emotional qualities act upon each other as both check and liberating agent: the strong white profile of a Venetian woman who looks like Voltaire is matched with a Rolls-Royce parked against a blank wall, a line of umbrellas at a funeral on a dark day in Paris and a Peruvian landscape in which a streak of white light divides the horizon between lowering clouds and barren terrain. That streak rhymes with the reflective sheen along the umbrellas and the stripe of shine presented by the car's hood and top seen from the side, and the rhyme is broken up but also redirected by the thin vertical profile, which blazes out from its foliage of hair. The sequence encompasses austere dignity, lifting gloom and hope in the face of adversity—but at an oblique angle, and without imposing a lesson.

In 1954 Frank applied for a Guggenheim; his proposal was broad ("'The Photographing of America' is a large order"), but then his references were Steichen, Brodovitch, Walker Evans, Meyer Schapiro and Alexander Liberman. He had taken the first picture that he would later use in *The Americans* before he even submitted the proposal. The rest of the pictures were taken in the latter half of '55, through '56 and into the beginning of '57 (his fellowship was renewed), over the course of one big cross-country road trip and a number of briefer ventures. He shot some 600 rolls of film, from which he chose eighty-two photographs for the book,

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first published in France by Delpire in 1958 and the following year in the United States by Grove Press.

The retrospective includes many of the pictures, including apparently the most memorable ones (though the book is sneaky, seeming to reveal yet another picture you hadn't noticed before on almost every perusal), and it also includes outtakes and two full contact sheets. While it could rightly be said that *The Americans* is first and foremost a book, and that individual images cannot be removed from its sweep and order without some violence to its integrity, the outtakes and contact sheets help provide an exploded and expansive view of the project. The first of the former to appear in the catalog, for example, is an extraordinary picture that Frank might have thought too broad to include in his book: it shows the first two letters of the "Hollywood" sign from behind and above, a rickety, feebly propped "OH," a huge sigh for the dull infinity of streetlights beyond that dissolve in the mist of anticlimax.

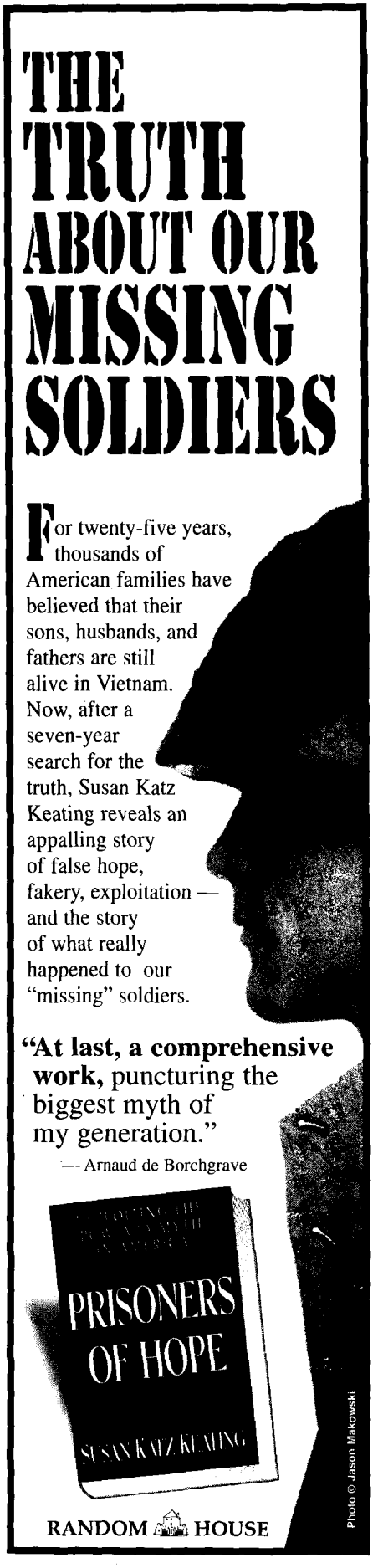
The ones he chose for the book were more subtle, more nuanced, more equivocal. An awful lot of people seem to find *The Americans* depressing, and so they did from the beginning. It got few reviews—the catalog's bibliography lists no more than four, three of them in photography magazines, although *Popular Photography* found the book significant enough to run seven short reviews, six of them disparaging. John Szarkowski, in his introduction to *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960,* quotes a few representative views from this lineup: "an attack on the United States," "the images of . . . a joyless man who hates the country of his adoption," "a sad poem for sick people."

Szarkowski goes on to point out that the book includes no pictures of lynchings, police brutality, crime, corruption or graphic poverty. Although social criticism is manifest in several shots, such as that of a New Orleans trolley—whites in front, blacks in the rear—and a few are more metaphorically suggestive, such as the Los Angeles picture, taken from a rooftop, that shows a guy sloping up the sidewalk apparently at the behest of a huge neon arrow above him, most of the photos are nonjudgmental, disengaged. Flags and jukeboxes recur as totems, people strike uncomposed attitudes, few pictures have an identifiable center. There is no question of a decisive moment here—these are the moments in between. Frank might be said to have been building an indeterminate realism, a way of seeing in which nothing was banal, nothing was freighted, people were off-kilter and in flux, and objects sat in uneasy repose. Reviewers in 1960 found it hateful, and people even today think it depressing, because it is most true to those aspects of American life that the average eye simply elides.

Anyway, there is a stubborn romanticism at work in it: the laughing black woman sitting on a chair in a field in South Carolina with the setting sun and a cross lined up behind her; the young female elevator operator in a Miami Beach hotel, looking sadly skyward while rich, fat blurs shift by. As Jack Kerouac wrote in his introduction, "Anybody doesnt like these pitchers dont like potry, see?" Frank, who gravitated to the 10th Street *refusés* scene not long after arriving in New York in the '40s (the show includes a 1985 tribute to them, a collage of Frank's circa-1950 portraits of Franz Kline, Claes Oldenburg, Red Grooms, Alfred Leslie and many lesser-knowns), met the Beats in their heyday and unsurprisingly made common cause. *The Americans* parallels *On the Road* not just in landscape and restlessness, but also in its partly camouflaged hunt for transcendence.

But Frank rode alone or with his family. He didn't get into the intense coterie aspect of the Beats until he started making films with them, beginning with *Pull My Daisy* in 1959. This ragged farce, based on a fragment of Kerouac's play *The Beat Generation,* stages the mutual incomprehension between a young bishop and a group of pets. It is a liberating pratfall exercise in which every aspect appears to have been made up on the spot, although only Kerouac's narration was actually improvised. The actors, who include Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky, Gregory Corso and, of all people, Delphine Seyrig (who starred a few years later in *Last Year in Marienbad,* at the opposite conceptual pole), goof off as unaffectedly as if there weren't a camera within miles. Frank's camera, meanwhile, is hopped-up or drifting, participant as much as observer.

For all the differences among Frank's eighteen movies (all but three of them are shorts), nearly every one shares this quality of seeming to get its effects by accident. They enact Zen and the art of filmmaking, the arrow finding the target in spite of the archer. This is both an ongoing Bronx cheer in the direction of the well-made film and a natural development of Frank's aesthetic: "MORE SPIRIT LESS TASTE" he proclaims in his caption to the 10th Street painters assemblage. Even so, the movies vary in effect and quality, often depending on who else was involved. That they are all visually beautiful goes without saying. They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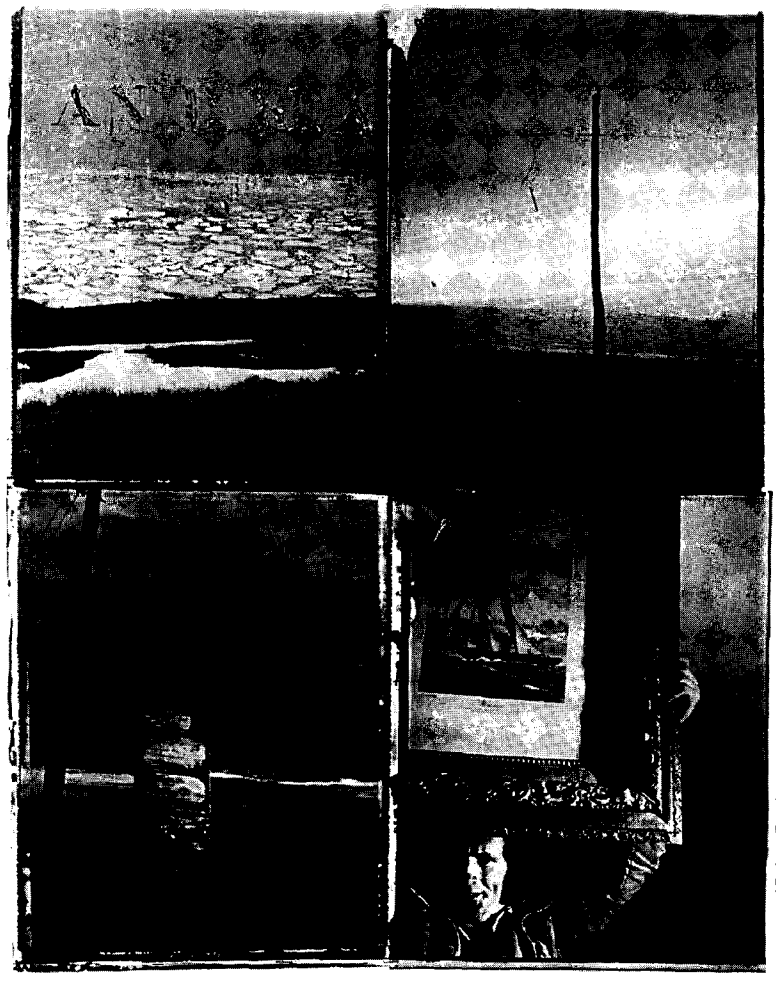
waver, however, in story and in concept.

Me and My Brother (1965-68), a fictionally expanded portrait of the touching and semi-catatonic Julius Orlovsky, is conceptually overloaded, but finds effective tension in alternating between nonactors and avant-garde stage players, black-and-white and color, document and satire. *Cocksucker Blues* (1972), a documentary about the 1971 American tour of the Rolling Stones and notorious because of its subjects' various moves to suppress it (mostly because of the amount of drug use on display; the title is that of a song Jagger sings offstage about a boy prostitute), has its *longueurs*, but must be the most truly anti-glamour depiction of pop stardom ever made. Attempts at more conventionally narrative cinema have fared less well. *Candy Mountain* (1987) presents the odd spectacle of Frank attempting to emulate those he influenced, a picaresque road picture undone by its own hipness. *Last Supper* (1992), on the other hand, is as turgid a piece of literary portentousness as a little-theater exercise by someone who's only just read Beckett.

Considerably enlivening the latter film are brief documentary video inserts that Frank shot himself. (Others are responsible for the principal cinematography.) Frank is absolutely incapable of making a clumsy or boring picture. He can proclaim "less taste and more spirit," and "less art and more truth" all he wants, the fact remains that he has art and, yes, taste coming out of his pores, and all his strategies to roughen his surfaces and debeautify his images only serve to underline their artistry. He can yank Polaroids out of the box before they're completely fixed and worry their edges and scrawl all over them, the effect is painterly. He can shoot pictures out of focus, in too much light or too little, of blank or homely or banal subjects, the result is never less than polished.

He can take a picture of ghastly subway graffiti (as in *Home Improvements*, 1985), and it will read "IT WAS DARK," the fragment of poster above it saying "SYMPTOMS." He can frame sad pictures of empty rooms with loud stenciled captions (as in *Moving Out*, 1984) and the whole construction will look (and here's the danger) perfect, a little too perfect, maybe, as if the pictures were just too pristine for what they depicted (the loft that was the setting of his first marriage, his now-dead parents' *wohnzimmer*, the effects of a presumably dead friend), so that he put in the screaming stencils to muddy them, and they did not clash but worked too well. He does come close to some kind of daunting ugliness with *Mute/Blind* (1989), a collage of thermal-transfer prints of a blind Pomeranian dog swirling around chromogenic prints of a statue of an elk whose eyes have been painted out, the whole mounted on red tinfoil, the title painted on in script. The script and the foil are what edge the piece toward agonizing kitsch, although there is nothing vulgar about the photos themselves.



Courtesy of Robert Frank

ANDREA, MABOU, 1977

Frank has been attempting to break out of mere photography for more than thirty years. After *The Americans* he took on some commercial work, but only seems to have initiated two brief photographic projects for himself, shooting pedestrians through the windows of New York City buses and sleepers on the beach at Coney Island, both in 1958. During the 1960s the closest he came to putting photographs on paper was in his unpublished book of *Me and My Brother*, which mixed together stills and frame enlargements. In 1970 he bought a house with the artist June Leaf in the harsh and barren landscape of northern Nova Scotia, in part as a purgative for urban vanities. After the death of his 20-year-old daughter Andrea in 1974, the terrain became the correlative of his internal wound, the rocks and pilings and glaciers appearing as emblems of his grief in the many pictures connected to her memory. The event shattered and remade him, just as he was beginning literally to break up and resuture his photographs. The pictures made in Nova Scotia before her death assemble a difficult beauty from bleak elements; in those made afterward the bleakness itself is the beauty that emerges pure from surfaces laden with verbal and textural scars.

The great majority of pictures that he has made in the past twenty years have been multi-panel constructions, most using words, many contrasting color and black-and-white. Of late he seems to have returned gradually to street photography, with mixed results. A series of shots of bus-station idlers, which appear in the catalog although not in the show (*#1 Birmingham, Alabama* [detail], 1987), are finely observed and appropriately grim and menacing, but at this late date they might be the work of any talented young photographer influenced by Frank. Some street shots from Lebanon, taken in 1991, with looming human figures crowding the bottom of the frame, put the viewer in mind, perhaps unavoidably, of the work of Gilles Peress. Still, a picture taken in Egypt in 1992, showing a boy out of focus just off the edge of an amazingly liquid wall of rubble against a sheet-white sky, doesn't much look like Frank's work or anybody else's, and may point in a new direction.

And a new direction is what we expect of Frank at this point, unfairly maybe,

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but then he raised his own stakes. There is a liability to having produced an enduring masterpiece at a relatively early point in one's career, more than one liability, really, since not only will that work set the terms for public assessment of anything produced later on, but there will also be numerous younger artists who have taken that work as a base and made their own departures from it. In a field as crowded as photography is today, that means most of the flight paths will be occupied. Frank, of course, averted such checks long ago by leaping off vertically from his ground, and then leaping again. That he somehow seems too young and too unfinished to be enthroned among the pillars is a measure of his success. For someone as ornery and restless as Frank, the retrospective can only be an opportunity to engage in new work that will make nonsense of all the sweeping critical summaries that it will have occasioned. •

The tragedy of Bosnia, and the long, troubled history of Islam in the Balkans.

In Europe's Shadows

BY FOUAD AJAMI

I.

The writer Ivo Andric, a Bosnian Croat born in 1892 in the town of Travnik and raised in the Latin Quarter of Sarajevo, knew success and fame. A beneficiary of Yugoslavia's special position during the years of the cold war, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1961. All the requisite things were said about the man and his artistry and his vision. But one great theme that ran through so much of Andric's work went unmeditated upon: his great dread of Islam in the Balkans, his allergy to the four centuries of Ottoman rule in Bosnia.

The hostility was difficult to miss; it was everywhere in his fiction. And it had been directly taken up in a work of his youth, *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia Under the Influence of Turkish Rule*. There, in full force, were so many of the great charges that Serb and Croat intellectuals would hurl against Ottoman rule and Slav converts to Islam:

> The effect of Turkish rule in Bosnia was absolutely negative. The Turks could not even bring a cultural content or a higher economic mission to those southern Slavs who converted to Islam; for their Christian subjects their rule meant a coarsening of customs and a step back in all respects.

Bosnia lay at the crossroads of empires, Andric writes of the remote, backward territory, but Turkish rule robbed it of its place in the life of Europe, and brought about its cruel isolation:

> According to its geographical position, Bosnia should have been the connection between the countries along the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, i.e., Bosnia should at one time have connected two peripheries of the Serbo-Croatian elements with two zones of European culture. Having fallen to Islam it lost the possibility of fulfilling this, its natural, role and of participating in the cultural development of Christian Europe (to which it belonged through ethnographic and geographic features). Instead, Bosnia became a mighty fortress against the Christian West. Bosnia was to remain in this unnatural position for the remainder of Turkish rule.

FOUAD AJAMI teaches at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Bosnia: A Short History
by Noel Malcolm
(New York University Press, 340 pp., $26.95)

Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed
by Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine Jr.
(Columbia University Press, 318 pp., $24.95)

Islam in the Balkans
by H.T. Norris
(University of South Carolina Press, 326 pp., $39.95)

The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina
edited by Mark Pinson
(Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 187 pp., $15)

Islam Between East and West
by Alija A. Izetbegovic
(American Trust Publications, 292 pp., $12)

Sarajevo: Exodus of a City
by Dzevad Karahasan
(Kodansha International, 123 pp., $10)

The Impossible Country: A Journey Through the Last Days of Yugoslavia
by Brian Hall
(David Godine Publishers, 352 pp., $23.95)

A religion born in "a foreign climate and social order," a religion "resistant to change of any kind" had disfigured the life of Bosnia, Andric maintained. A native elite of southern Slavs acquiesced in this tale of ruin, and they did it to preserve their large estates: "Everybody who wanted to retain his property, the position associated with it, and all his privileges, had no choice but to convert to Islam." In this spectacle of endless desolation there stood out only the Franciscan monks, who kept alive an intellectual tradition, and broke the "fateful isolation of Bosnia" and worked with a "self-denial that bordered on martyrdom." The Franciscans managed to "preserve a lively literary activity which even though chiefly serving religious purposes, nonetheless represents the fruit of noble effort."

Sarajevo, a city of Ottoman Islam, had been home to Andric, but he saw only degradation and backwardness. And in a selective rendering of history so typical of nationalist tracts, the old pre-Ottoman past of Bosnia was made pretty and grand, a veritable Eden before the coming of the Turkish plague. Andric, of course, was a careful man. He was anxious to cover up his tracks. For, before the literary career and the Nobel Prize, he had been ambassador of (Royal) Yugoslavia to the Third Reich at the time of the signing of the Tripartite Pact; and he was there in Vienna in March 1941, when Yugoslavia capitulated and joined the Axis powers. As Ivo Banac, the noted historian of the Balkans, has observed, one can see, in the photographs of the signing, the "silhouette of Ivo Andric" alongside Ribbentrop and Cincar Markovic, the foreign minister of Yugoslavia.

Andric was allowed to put that past behind him. A reinvented Yugoslavia led by Tito (the last Habsburg, as A.J.P. Taylor called him) gave the South Slavs a reprieve, at a terrible price, from the wild calls of nationalism. Yet the phobias expressed by Andric went deep, and they survived the change of political regimes.

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The tide had long gone out on Islam in the Balkans. Muslims had remained in the lands of Yugoslavia, but they were marked men and women, caught in the cross-currents of Serbian and Croat nationalism.

In the eyes of their detractors, the survival of the Muslims was proof of cunning, yet another trick on history. "Muslims change their cap as the wind changes," a Croat tells Brian Hall in *The Impossible Country*, a fine book of reportage. It is the old stereotype, "the Yid with the thousand faces," as Hall writes. "The wily trader whose state was elsewhere and nowhere, whose God was Mammon, and who would melt away during dangerous times but would be right back after the war, owning the store when the famine struck." From the time that doctrines of nationalism and ideas of chosenness hit the Serbs (and, to a lesser extent, the Croats), Islam's people had seemed only like a lingering aftermath of the Ottoman incursion.

The Serb and Croat integralists could not concede the legitimacy of the Muslims. Whatever the Muslims were, they were not a national community. The Serbs were certain that the Muslims were "Serbs of the Muslim faith," whereas the Croats were equally sure that the Muslims were people of a "Croat coloration." After a mighty storm, a change of fortunes, a long campaign of terror, those lapsed Slavs would return to the faith, casting aside the religion of the Turks for their ancestral faith.

II.

There is a Serb way of telling history. At its heart, of course, is the apocalypse at Kosovo, the great divide of 1389. There is only grandeur before it, there is only usurpation after it. In this history, the Serbs suffer earthly defeat, but they acquire a heavenly kingdom; the Turks are kept at bay and the Serbs keep themselves intact, put themselves beyond the conqueror's reach and the conqueror's embrace, refrain from collaborating with their infidel oppressors and wait for historical redemption. Fate had been cruel to Serbia: the capital city of Belgrade, the chroniclers say, was destroyed forty times; its holy lands in Kosovo were lost to the infidels, overwhelmed by the Albanians. Serbia had done sentry duty for Christendom, but its neighbors showed no appreciation. Devoted and pure and noble, the Serbs would win great campaigns after heartbreaking sacrifices only to be tricked and swindled by the Magyars and the Austrians and the Croats. Brian Hall, traveling among the Serbs in 1991, is exceptionally good at capturing this Serb sense of pride and betrayal at the hands of outside powers.

This history is an invention, spun out of vanity and a need for consolation. For fate meandered in the Balkans. And its meanderings can now be more clearly understood, and measured against some of the region's deadly myths, thanks to the appearance of outstanding works of research by the impassioned British journalist Noel Malcolm, the exacting American historians Robert Donia and John Fine, and the painstaking British historian H.T. Norris, and thanks to a splendid collection of essays edited by Mark Pinson. The real history of Bosnia can now be retrieved and told.

The old order that the Turks overran in the Balkans had all but collapsed of its own weight, and the region had been brought to ruin by peasant revolts. The peninsula was divided among Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs, Albanians, Venetians, Genoese, all people at odds with one another. The Turkish conquests were swift: Athens in 1456, Bosnia in 1462-66, Herzegovina 1481. The Pax Turcica created "structures of collaboration," in the words of Fernand Braudel. In return for tribute and obedience, the subject peoples were left to lead the lives they had known. There was no great missionary impulse in the Turkish incursions, no overwhelming urge akin to the spirit that Spain brought with it to the new world, to extirpate old ways. On the margins, life improved for the peasantry, for they were given a break from forced labor. The Serbs, like others around them, made their accommodation with the new order of things.

The Serbs love the legend of themselves standing at the ramparts defending Christendom. But the truth is much less simple. After Kosovo, Serbs fought Hungarians, and they fought on behalf of the Turks as their vassals and allies in intermittent campaigns that stretched nearly two centuries. Serbs made their way into the Ottoman court and imperial army, and found a niche for themselves in the polyglot Ottoman world. A report from the final years of the sixteenth century, cited by Malcolm, tells us that Slavonic was the third language of the empire after Turkish and Arabic, that the Sultan's court was full of renegade Slavs.

The Ottoman order, after all, was remarkably decentralized. Its basic social unit was the *millet*, or community, which was defined along religious lines. The *millets* were self-governing entities left to their own laws and their own leaders. In this scheme of things, the Orthodox Church thrived. The Papacy had been the great enemy of the Ottoman; the Ottomans thus showed favor toward Orthodoxy. As John Fine puts it, "the Patriarch lived in the Ottoman capital where he was easily controlled. The Pope lived in Rome, outside the empire, and was the main source of crusades against the Ottomans." Catholicism was the faith of Austria, and Austria was the Ottoman Empire's great enemy. Orthodoxy, by contrast, was easy to coopt, and to work with. Where Franciscan monasteries suffered, and the Catholics were denied permission to repair old churches or to build new ones, Orthodoxy prospered.

Indeed, the demographic edge that the Serbs today enjoy in Bosnia relative to the Catholic Croats (Bosnia entered its current troubles with a population that was 43 percent Muslim, 31 percent Serb and 17 percent Croat) was a gift of the Ottoman conquest. Malcolm tells us that a Metropolitan (Orthodox) bishop in Bosnia is first mentioned in 1532, that the first Orthodox Church in Sarajevo was built in the mid-sixteenth century. There had been a scant Orthodox presence in Bosnia before the Turks, for the Franciscans had the upper hand. Orthodoxy had been present only in Hercegovina, among the nobility and the landholders; and even there the Franciscans had been making inroads and gaining converts from among the Orthodox. But the balance was to change with the advent of the Turks in Bosnia. It was the Orthodox Church that now gained new converts.

There was high religion and low religion. The world of the Balkans was a peasant world of superstition and folk belief. There was little, if any, literacy in the scripture. There was no priestly class of any status. Conversion was easy, and believers were often chameleons. Onto their new faith the converts grafted their old ways. What emerged, according to the historian Peter Sugar, was a "variety of European or rather Balkan folk-Islam, which tended to include baptism, icons to prevent mental illness and many other basically non-Muslim features." There were mountaineers who called themselves Constantin in front of Christians and Sulayman in front of Muslims. The dead would be given a service by the Orthodox Church and a subsequent burial in a Muslim cemetery. The religious boundaries were easily, and frequently, transgressed. And the guardians of the differing faiths knew the fickle ways of their flocks. "There was unspoken agreement," H.T. Norris writes in his superb book, "dictated by a common interest among priests, rabbis, educated imams and others to seek some common religious ground." A church favored by the

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authorities—as the Orthodox Church was favored by Ottoman rule—could prosper in such a fluid environment.

Bosnia in particular lacked a strong national church of its own. The Bosnian Church, an independent Catholic Church in schism with Rome, had no bishops of its own who lived within its territory. The Bishop of Bosnia lived in Slavonia. As Donia and Fine write, "many peasants probably rarely or never saw a priest, and peasants tend to be indifferent to formal religion if it is not pressed on them." Catholicism and Orthodoxy fared no better than the local Bosnian church. Thus Islam had little competition here. The Bosnians had never been fervent Christians.

Conversion, though, was only one explanation for the demographic growth of the Orthodox under Ottoman rule. Settlement, the migration of Serbs into Bosnia, was the other part of the story. With the Ottoman conquest there was large-scale migration of Catholics from Bosnia into Croatia and Dalmatia. Their vacant land, the research of Fine and Malcolm confirms, was settled by Muslim newcomers and by the Orthodox. Some of the Orthodox came into Bosnia proper from the poorer Hercegovina, others from the lands of Serbia. Good conquerors who were out for taxation and income, the Ottomans wanted the vacated land settled. The Orthodox were given their deal—the independent *millet*, a more advantageous taxation system than that of the Catholics—and they took it.

This, then, was the setting within which the Slavs who converted to Islam made their choice. They did it over a long period of time; and they did it while leaving much of their social life unaltered. In the towns of Bosnia, Islam found particularly fertile ground.

From its rise in Mecca and Medina in the seventh century, Islam had been a religion of towns and cities, a thoroughly urban culture of mosques and bazaars and *madrasahs* (religious schools). Bosnia was to be no exception. It was here, in the principal towns of Bosnia and Hercegovina, that Ottoman Islam spread its own brand of culture. Sarajevo was the child of this development. From a frontier mining town it grew into a major city of the empire, equal in rank and in size to Thessalonica and Edrine, eclipsed only by Istanbul itself. An enterprising governor named Isa Bey, a nearly legendary figure who came into Bosnia with the beginnings of the conquest and was governor from 1464 to 1468, gave Sarajevo its most precious monuments. It was to him that the city owed its governor's residence, its Emperor Mosque (*careva dzamija*), its

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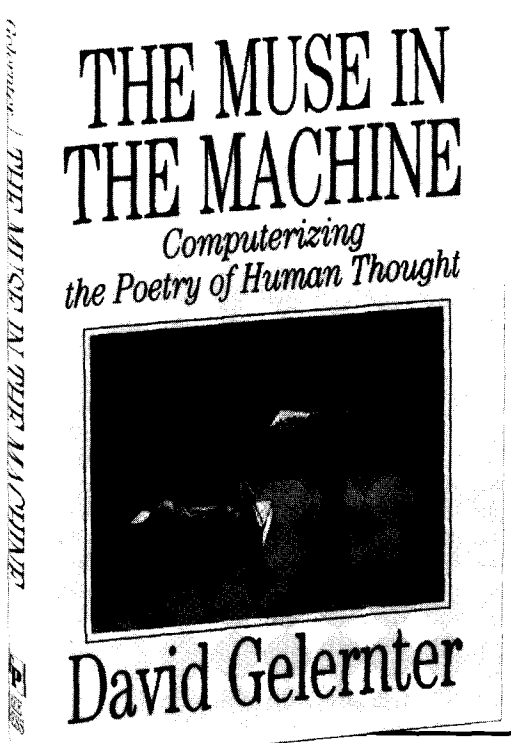

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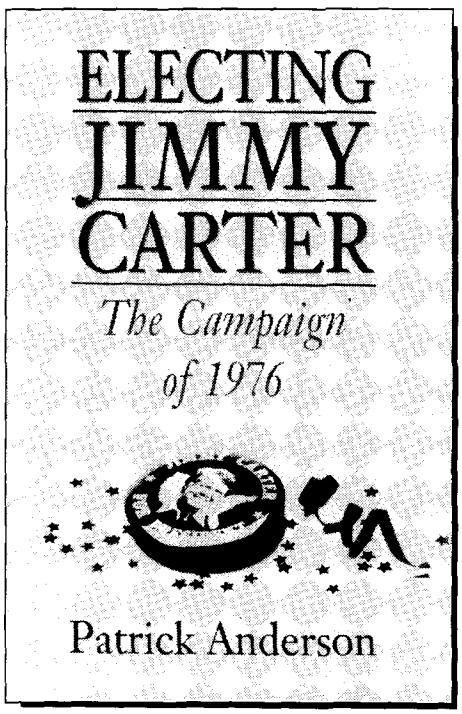

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public bath. A governor of a later period, Ghazi Husrev Bey (1521-1541), laid out its streets of crafts and trades, and its great mosque on the grounds of which he was buried. A folksong celebrated the generosity of the man:

I built the seminary and the minaret.
I built the clocktower and near it a mosque.
I built Taslihan and the cloth market.
I built three bridges in Sarajevo.
I turned a village into the town of Sarajevo.

Sarajevo was far away from the center of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul. It was twice as far from Istanbul as from Vienna, four times further from Istanbul than from Belgrade. The Ottomans ruled, to be sure; but geography dictated that their rule would be indirect. Islam anchored the political life of the province, but this was not a Muslim state. The local urban elite of Sarajevo and the landed elite of smaller towns governed the mountainous territory. In the words of Ivo Banac, the Bosnian Muslims "identified with the Ottoman state but were always fully aware that they were not Anatolians." A class of local *kapetans* (force and garrison commanders) kept the peace, and also kept the Habsburgs at bay. It is true that Islam was accepted as the religion of the conquering state, but this was a rather cosmopolitan faith, and it gave a cosmopolitan cast to Bosnia's culture and to its institutions. Landlords converted and kept their prerogatives, merging their interests, as they were bound to, with those of the dominant faith.

The world of Ottoman Bosnia was a fragile world. Since it was relatively tolerant, it was relatively easy to bring down. Bandits, or *haiduks*, stalked this territory of impossible mountains through much of its history, their ballads alternating between expressions of anarchism and expressions of revenge against the rapacious infidels. The old *haiduks* were lambs compared with the breeds that modern nationalism would bring to the fore. When Balkan nationalism grew enraged in the nineteenth century, and the Pan-movements assaulted the ancien regime in that belt of mixed populations from the Baltic to the Adriatic, the half-hearted reforms that the Ottoman rulers were tinkering with in the 1850s and 1860s were overwhelmed. The Ottoman Empire had entered the "Concert of Europe" after Britain and France had come to her aid against Russia in the Crimean War in 1853. Europe now gained access to the Ottoman domain. The Christians of the Ottoman Empire came to enjoy the protection of the European powers. The juridical inequalities between Muslims and Christians were struck down, and political life grew increasingly secular. But the westernizing reforms did not work. They triggered a backlash among the conservative populations of the empire; what began as an effort to save the feeble realm speeded its demise. There is no need to prettify the old Ottoman world; it was petty and vindictive, it had its countless cruelties and slights. But it was nothing like what was to come, nothing like the hell that ethnic hysteria would make out of the Balkans in the age of nationalism.

For the old live-and-let-live pluralism of the ancien regime, the purveyors of the new nationalisms substituted a more militant idea of the self. Where lines once meandered and broke down, the world was tidied up and made pure and whole. The new world and its emerging outline could be seen, and its shrillness could be heard, in the poetry of the new nationalism. Here is a Montenegrin monk and poet, the Prince of Montenegro, Petar II, Petrovic-Njegos, in bloodthirsty doggerel written as the nationalisms of the Balkans were gathering force (the reference to Milos Oblilic is to the Serbian knight who is said to have assassinated the Ottoman Sultan Murad I at Kosovo; the 'Id, literally a festival, refers to the principal Muslim holidays—the feast of sacrifice and the feast following the month of Ramadan).

So tear down minarets and mosques,
and kindle the Serbian yule logs,
and let us paint our Easter eggs.
Observe the two fasts honestly,
and as for the remainder, do as you like.
I swear to you by the creed of Milos Oblilic
and by the trusty weapons that I carry,
our faiths will be submerged in blood.
The better of the two will rise redeemed.
The 'Id can never live in peace
with Christmas Day.

III.

The old order came crashing down in the 1870s. The Ottomans were overextended and on the run; their ramshackle empire had declared its bankruptcy and gone into a kind of receivership, existing at the sufferance of the European balance of power. Peasant revolts in Bosnia and Bulgaria in 1875, revolts that began as class rebellions and turned into rampant slaughter and a religious fight between Muslim rulers and Christian serfs, blew up the feeble Ottoman system of control.

A quarter of a century earlier, in the Crimean War, Britain and France had gone to war on the side of Turkey against Russia. This time around, when the Balkan troubles sparked a Turko-Russian War, Britain had taken a more detached view of things. The conscience of Europe had been stirred by the slaughter. In Britain, a "human rights campaign" pitted the furious moralism of Gladstone against the cool realpolitik of Disraeli. Gladstone argued that the balance of power ought to be shredded and pushed aside: "We have been involved in moral complicity with the basest and blackest outrages upon record within the present century, if not within the memory of man." He had accepted the logic of empire in the Crimean War, but now he railed against the Turks for their "elaborate and refined cruelty," their "relentless fatalism," their "abominable and bestial lust," their "utter and violent lawlessness."

Many of Turkey's European possessions were severed in the diplomacy that followed the Russo-Turkish War. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Serbia, Romania and Montenegro were granted full independence. Bulgaria was enlarged, and a part of it set up as a Russian satellite. Bosnia-Hercegovina, the poorest of the lot, was handed over to the Habsburgs. The Dual Monarchy had not wanted Bosnia, which meant more Slavs. Austria only wanted Bosnia denied to Serbia, the would-be Piedmont of the South Slavs. And so the move into Bosnia in 1878 was a defensive one.

The Muslims of Bosnia were now faced with the great wrenching question of living under alien rule. A debate unfolded about the permissibility of life under a Christian power. Thousands left, landholders and peasants. Perhaps as many as 150,000 Bosnian Muslims emigrated between 1878 and the end of Austrian rule in 1918. The majority ended up in Turkey. Thanks to the scholarship of Robert Donia and Mark Pinson, among others, it is easier to reconstruct that Austrian interlude. The Austrian rulers were to disappoint Bosnia's Christians. More than anything else, the Austrians were interested in order, in keeping the new nationalist ambitions in check. And so the prerogatives of the Muslim landlords were left largely intact, the communal life of the Muslims was undisturbed.

Benjamin Kallay, the shrewd Hungarian-born Finance Minister from 1882 to 1903, and the architect of Austria's Bosnia policy, set out to promote the notion of *bosnjostvo*, or Bosnianism, as a counter to the doctrines of Croat and Serb nationalism. A historian who knew the southern Slavs, a diplomat who had served as Austrian consul in Belgrade, Kallay was well acquainted with Serbia, with its grievances and its ambitions. His *Bosnjak* project, however, was doomed. It was an old, eighteenth-century answer,

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and it could not stand against the furies of nationalism. Malcolm has it right: "Had Kallay somehow been able to isolate Bosnia's Orthodox and Catholics utterly from the religious, cultural and political developments in neighboring lands, his policy might have stood a chance, but such total isolation would have been quite impossible."

The Dual Monarchy introduced some industrialization into Bosnia, and a higher measure of literacy. The Bosnians were given, that is, the means of rebellion against their rulers. Austria formally annexed Bosnia in 1908, after the Young Turk rebellion in Istanbul, but it had no way of coping with its troubles: student unrest, peasant revolt, growing militancy among the Serbs. Some political liberalization was permitted, and political parties based in the three religious communities, networks of prosperous elites, made their appearance. But it was too late for this kind of benign politics of restriction. Secret societies seized with the romance of Pan-Serb unification (the Black Hand, Unification or Death), radical groups committed to Yugoslav (South Slav) unity, were a better reflection of what was to come. From this crucible emerged Gavrilo Princip, the Bosnian Serb assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. That date was the anniversary of the battle of Kosovo. At his trial Princip proclaimed, "I am a Yugoslav nationalist, aiming for the unification of all Yugoslavs, and I don't care what form of state, but it must be free from Austria." Princip had been educated and trained in Belgrade; it was there that he and his fellow conspirators acquired their bombs.

In the beginning, in Bosnia, there had been the great question of land ownership. It would never go away. It was more important than the deeds of young assassins. It was the land that had, presumably, led Muslim converts astray: for vines and apple trees they had forsaken the ways of their ancestors, and delivered themselves to the dreaded Turks. The land question was not only a material issue, it was also a great metaphor: the large Muslim estates versus the Serb *kmets* ("sharecroppers" is a better translation than "serfs"), the wily people who had given themselves over to the devil on one side versus the burdened peasants who clung to their ways, the parasitic towns living off the fat of the land (Sarajevo's image in Serb folklore) versus God's chosen but tormented people tilling the fields. It was easy work turning the land question into a hurricane of resentments.

The landowning class was a small one. On the eve of the First World War, as Donia and Fine tell us, the large Muslim landlords made up only 2 percent of the more than 600,000 Muslims of Bosnia, less than 1 percent of the total population. The great mass of the Muslims were "free peasants." Still, there was an intersection between land ownership and religious affiliation. Of the nearly 80,000 *kmets*, the overwhelming majority (about 75 percent) were Serbs, the rest were divided between the Croats (20 percent) and the Muslims. The *kmets* may not have been the serfs of medieval times, but they were a burdened lot. The courts of the land invariably preferred the propertied class. The religious separation, in sum, deepened the customary chasm between the landed class and the tillers of the land. Though peasant revolts had brought the Ottoman regime to an end, the peasantry was to be denied its revenge and its fulfillment. The first great disappointment had been handed down by the Dual Monarchy. Land reform and the breakup of large estates were anathema to the Magyar gentry of the empire, and that powerful class, with a disgruntled Slav peasantry of its own, was to prove a natural ally of the Muslim landholders.

The Muslim elites took the burden of the land question—the defense of property rights—into the successor state created in the aftermath of the war. The landed interests knew that such a narrow defense of prerogatives would not do: they would have to offer a broader appeal on behalf of all Muslims. But their politics was, inevitably, conservative, a rearguard action against grander causes. To the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—in 1919, it was renamed Yugoslavia—the Serbs and the Croats had brought far greater ambitions than the Muslims.

The Serbs in particular came with a heady sense of triumphalism. In their eyes, Yugoslavia was really "Serboslavia." And there was a handy legend to sustain them: defeated in 1915 by a joint German-Austrian-Bulgarian operation, the Serbian army had marched through Montenegro and Albania to the Adriatic, and crossed to Corfu to return at the end of the war. The retreat became an epic: the chosen nation overcoming adversity yet again. The new state was their gift and their redemption. "In Serbian eyes," Donia and Fine note, "Yugoslavia was the embodiment of Serbian centralism, ruled by the Serbian dynasty and led by Serbian army officers, bureaucrats, and parliamentarians." In the Serb fantasy, they would remake the others. The Croats and the Slovenes, "corrupted" by contact with the Habsburgs, would be rehabilitated, and the Bosnians, really lapsed

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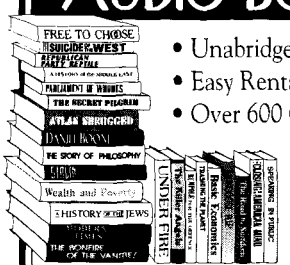

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Serbs, would be forced back into the fold. And one thing the Serbs were sure of was the disposition of the land. The estates of the Muslims, they promised, would be destroyed. In 1917, the Serbian government in exile had pledged five hectares of land to each combatant who would join their cause.

It is no wonder the Muslims of Bosnia viewed the collapse of the Dual Monarchy with ambivalence. Much as they would have wanted to identify with the new freedom—and many of them were devoted to the cause of South Slav unity—they knew that the new order would not be fully theirs. The unbridled enthusiasm of the Serbs for the new dispensation, and the attacks by Bosnian Serbs against Muslim estates and property, sobered the Muslims. In November 1918, Serb and Montenegrin soldiers entered Bosnia, and mayhem was the result. The leading Muslim cleric reported that 1,000 Muslim men were killed, 76 women were put to the torch and some 270 villages were pillaged. The worst offenders, Noel Malcolm writes, were from Serbia proper, men who had not known Muslims or lived with them.

It was a nervous Muslim community that went into the Serb-dominated Kingdom of Serbs and Croats and Slovenes. But the Muslims were to become a swing force between Belgrade and Zagreb, the people in the middle between Serb centralism and the Croat project of a decentralized country. Led by astute politicians, they made the best of their situation. Luck threw on the scene a shrewd political leader named Mehmed Spaho, who dominated the politics of the Muslims' principal political instrument, the Yugoslav Muslim Organization. A son of the merchant class, Spaho identified himself as a Yugoslav. (One of his brothers identified himself as a Serb, and the other as a Croat.) He found a role for himself in the fractured parliamentary life of the inter-war years. He secured an alliance with the Croats as a balance to the power of the Serbs. He used the power of his political bloc to ease the burden of the land reforms on the Muslims. He obtained some financial compensation for lands that were distributed to the *kmets*. More important perhaps, Spaho and his Yugoslav Muslim Organization were able to retain the geographical and administrative identity of Bosnia in the new federal polity. The center of Muslim life held.

An interlude of royal dictatorship imposed in 1929 redrew the map of Yugoslavia, cutting across the old ethnic and national lines, strengthening Serb hegemony and denying Bosnia its old boundaries. This was a triumph for Serb extremists, who were tired, they said, of indulging "the Turks." But this administrative change did not stick. The Muslim community had become conscious of its own identity and weight, and the Croats were in full rebellion. The Serbs had the centralized polity they had wanted, but they could not hold it or reconcile the other communities to it. Ante Pavelic, a Croat zealot with ties to Mussolini's Italy, soon quit the country for its fascist neighbor to agitate for Croatian independence. He returned to head the notorious Ustasha regime in Croatia, which was set up under the protection of the Axis Powers after the Germans overran the country. Yugoslavia had tried to appease the Reich, and signed the pact in Vienna that Ivo Andric witnessed on March 25, 1941. But a rebellion in Belgrade against the accord had brought down on Yugoslavia the Führer's wrath. A campaign of massive bombing, and a swift ground attack of German, Italian, Bulgarian and Hungarian forces, put an end to the old Yugoslav monarchy.

The Ustasha ideologists who ran the collaborationist Independent State of Croatia knew what to make of Bosnia's Muslims: they were Croats of the Islamic faith. As Ante Pavelic put it, the "Croat national consciousness never was extinguished in the Muslim element of Bosnia, and after the departure of the Turks has resurfaced." Croatian integralism borrowed a page from the book of its Serbian counterpart: the autonomy of Bosnia-Hercegovina was denied, its boundaries redrawn to subordinate it to the Croat project. Inflamed after years of frustration, Croatian chauvinism grew genocidal.

Nearly one-third of the population of the Croat regime (1.9 million out of 6.3 million) was Serb. It was time for the Yugoslav calamity to begin in earnest. The Ustasha would show the Serbs, the Jews and the Gypsies no mercy. As for the Muslims: "for their part," writes Banac, "the Ustasha sought to implicate the Muslims in their anti-Serb violence." No group covered itself with glory in those years. The great terror of the Ustasha begat the terror of the Chetniks—the Serb irregulars named after the brigands who had defied Ottoman power in Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia. Some upper-class Muslims in Hercegovina and southeastern Bosnia were drawn into the ranks of the Ustasha and committed their share of the terror.

In the struggle of those years between Zagreb and Belgrade, the general tilt among the Bosnian Muslims was in favor of Zagreb; but the worldview of the Ustasha did not accommodate fine distinctions. It had no room for a Muslim role in the great Croatian undertaking. As early as the summer and autumn of 1941, the Muslim *ulama* of Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka and Tuzla issued resolutions condemning the theft of property, the forced conversion of Serbs to Catholicism, the rampant illegality. Of course, these resolutions would not stay the hands of the Chetniks. A Serb fury, particularly in Hercegovina, was let loose on the Muslims. Malcolm writes, summing up those terrible years:

> Altogether 75,000 Bosnian Muslims are thought to have died in the war: at 8.1 percent of their total population, this was a higher proportion than that suffered by the Serbs (7.3 percent), or by any other people except the Jews and the Gypsies. Muslims had fought on all sides—Ustasha, German, Chetnik, Partisan—and had been killed by all sides.

The program of the anti-fascist Partisans, led by Josip Broz (Tito), was perhaps the best outcome the Muslims could have hoped for. True enough, the former Austro-Hungarian corporal and labor organizer had attracted a disproportionate number of Serbs into his guerrilla bands. But this son of a Croat father and a Slovene mother, born in Kumrovec, a village on the Croat-Slovene border, had to restrain the passions of the Serbs if his own dictatorship was to prevail. For Tito, the multinational option was a practical necessity. The Communist labor organizer was not especially fond of Islam and Muslims. And he had no sympathy for Muslim landlords in Bosnia; the prerogatives of that class would be liquidated in no time. Still, the marginal man in Tito made him a natural ally of the Muslims and of Bosnia's mixed identity.

Tito knew that the Muslims needed protection, and he offered it. He had provided Muslims protection during the war, when he reined in sectarian revenge with strict rules on how captured Muslim (and Croat) villages were to be treated. His slogan "Brotherhood and Unity" succeeded because it gave the South Slavs a way out of the murderous fight between Croats and Serbs. There was violence aplenty, in Tito's way of doing things; the Partisans hunted down and murdered thousands of their opponents or drove them into exile. There are estimates that 250,000 may have been killed by Tito's new regime. But Tito's political success was owed to more than violence. The lands of Yugoslavia had seen enough killing, and Tito prevailed because he made the traumatized population an offer that was hard to refuse: order and a suspension

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of nationalist strife.

In a parody of another multinational state, the Soviet Union, Tito both acknowledged and denied the contending nationalities. They were given their republics, but hemmed in by a ruling party, and by personal autocracy at the top. Yugoslavs were given liberties unknown in the Communist world, such as the freedom to travel and to work abroad. Bosnia was given its own independence and identity, a microcosm of the larger multinational state. It was a juggling act, merciful in retrospect. Islamic courts were suppressed, and the *mektebs*, or primary religious schools, were shut down, as was the Muslim printing house in Sarajevo; but the Muslims were given in return the gift of ambiguity. The murderous issue of their identity was deferred.

In the census of 1948, some 72,000 Muslim Bosnians declared themselves Serbs, 25,000 declared themselves Croats and 778,000 chose to register as undeclared. Yugoslavism may have been an artificial identity, manufactured for the convenience of a dictatorship, but it was an identity that the Bosnian Muslims received with relief. And they were to be aided by Tito's grandiose international ambitions. In the 1950s, his bid for leadership in the "non-aligned" world went hand in hand with a general improvement in the treatment of Islam at home. By 1968 the regime and its ideology granted the Muslims their identity as a distinct nation; and the Muslims of Bosnia came to revere the vain man at the helm. He did not put an end to the poverty of their republic—in 1965 the per capita income of Bosnia was 69 percent of the Yugoslav average—but he gave them a rough measure of equality; and he extended them the protection of his court against the mob. But Tito was an improviser, and his skill went with him to his grave.

IV.

It was in 1983, in the brief interlude between Tito's death and the deluge, that a Sarajevo court sentenced a lawyer by the name of Alija Izetbegovic and a dozen other Bosnian Muslim leaders to long prison terms for plotting to transform Bosnia into Islamistan, an Islamic state. The remnants of the old apparatus charged Izetbegovic also with another sin: he sought, they said, to transform Bosnia into a parliamentary democracy. In those days the Pan-Islamic millennium in Iran was in full swing, and the fear of Islam was an uncontrollable obsession on both sides of the Atlantic. The Islamic bogeyman invoked in the Sarajevo district court would be there for the Serbs and the Croats to use in the imminent scramble for Bosnia. Between the Louvre and the Quran, there stood only Christendom's soldiers—the Croat inheritors of Latin Christendom, the Serb children of Byzantium. The old victories of the Turks would be avenged.

Izetbegovic's book, *Islam Between East and West*, published in 1980, should have been a defense lawyer's dream. An amateurish work, an intellectual hodgepodge, it is the product of an anxious *assimilé*, a child of the Western tradition reassuring himself that all the sources of his mind add up to a coherent whole, a man of our messy world born at the crossroads of cultures. The index alone is sufficient proof of the man's eclecticism. This must be the only book on Islam with nine references to Dostoevski, seven to Albert Camus, eleven to Engels, nine to Hegel, three to Malraux, two to Rembrandt, ten to Bertrand Russell, eight to Kenneth Clark and so on. This is not the work of a Muslim fundamentalist, or a traditional apologist.

A fundamentalist or an apologist would not heap praise on the Anglo-Saxon world, on the "Anglo-Saxon spirit in history," seeing in the "Anglo-Saxon way" and its blend of church and state a method akin to that of Islam. The Anglo-Saxons, Izetbegovic observes, broke with continental Europe, because they had been influenced by the Arabs and Islam: Roger Bacon, the "founder and forerunner of England's later spiritual progress," had been a student of Arabic "strongly influenced by Ibn Sina, whom he considered to be the greatest philosopher since Aristotle." And everything about Bacon and the Anglo-Saxon legacy "might by explained by this fact." Like the culture of the Anglo-Saxons, the culture of the Muslims knew no inquisition.

It is a strange but affecting sight, this man of modern Sarajevo cutting a deal between Anglo-Saxon pragmatism and his ancestral faith. It is no wonder that zealous Muslim volunteers from "the East" who went recently to Bosnia found the Muslims of Bosnia a peculiar lot, secularists through and through, children of Europe lightly touched by the faith. And a Bosnian from the town of Zenica issued the definitive verdict on the volunteers and on Bosnian Islam: the volunteers from "the East," he said, had tried to grow palm trees in Bosnia, but they failed, because "only apple trees grow here."

The terrible work of Franjo Tudjman in Croatia and Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia has been made easier by the Islamic bogeyman stalking Europe, but there is a great pathos in the nervous Izetbegovic clinging to the pluralist myth of Europe to ward off the dangers all around. For the pluralism of Europe *is* a myth. In their insistence that their own tolerance and their own multiethnic city of Sarajevo are the true expressions of Europe, Izetbegovic and his brave people have misread European history. It is much more likely that the genuine sons of Europe, the perfect embodiments of its cruel history and dark nationalism and populist frenzy, are Milosevic and Tudjman—and not Izetbegovic. Europe has not been kind to the outsider. It cast out and destroyed its Jews. There is no evidence that it will gladly make a place for its Muslims.

I do not know Sarajevo, but the elegies for the city are familiar to me. I grew up in Beirut, and the echo is unmistakable. The mourners for Sarajevo have been saying the sort of things that the mourners for Beirut once said: it was a place of many cultures, a city where diverse faiths met and mated. In the laments for the

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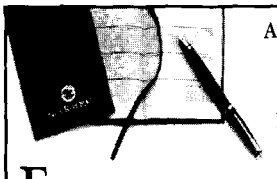

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Balkan city that was created by Islam and Rome and Byzantium, I recall the bitter features of Beirut's fate: the fragile civility stalked by its nemesis in the hills above, the ethnic neighborhoods bringing communities together while keeping them apart, the unexpected volatility and the sudden call to arms, the terrifying magnitude of the hatred and the ease with which civilization slips away. Sarajevo's Latin Quarter had formed Ivo Andric and given him its culture, but all its culture had not stilled in him his primeval fear of "the Turk." Years later Radovan Karadzic, a Bosnian Serb of Montenegrin origin and a Sarajevo psychiatrist, would take up arms against his own city. Serbs and "Turks," he said, were like cats and dogs: they could not live together. And so it was fine to kill.

The Sarajevan way, we now know, was one of the few and the finest moments of cosmopolitanism. It is delicately depicted by Dzevad Karahasan, a former dean of the Academy of Theatrical Arts at the University of Sarajevo, now in exile in Salzburg, in *Sarajevo: Exodus of a City*. It is a book of lamentations. It shows an exile's grief, and an exile's love of detail. A Muslim with a Serb wife, Karahasan has little to say about politics, which he treats with an almost willful contempt. He prefers to behold Sarajevo as it was before its fall, and so he writes about the cuisine of the city and its architecture.

An Ottoman city in a river valley, Sarajevo is made up of *mahalas*, or residential quarters, on the inner hillsides, and a *charshiya*, the city center. "The *mahalas*," he writes,

> are like rays spread around a focal point. Hence, looking from the city center, on one side stands the Muslim *mahala* called Vratnik; on the other side the Catholic *mahala* called Latinluk; on the third side the Eastern Orthodox *mahala* called Tashlihan; on the fourth side the Jewish *mahala* called Byelave. There are also some lesser *mahalas* (Bistrik, Myetash, Kovachi), each of them determined—just like the bigger ones—by one faith, one language, one system of customs.

This kind of city survives on sufferance. The communities must want it, they must be willing to live with the saving pleasantries and juggling of identities. The communal self is never erased in such a setting. "Discovering the other I discover myself," Karahasan says, "recognizing the other I recognize myself." Men do not have to "rejoice in differences," in Karahasan's sentimental words; they need only tolerate them. And tolerate them Sarajevo did. Austrian *sevdalinkas*, or folk love dirges, composed in Vienna to the verses of Germanic poets, were adopted by the Sarajevans as their own long after they were forgotten in Austria itself. The architecture of the city, too, reflected its tangled paternity: the "pseudo-Oriental" style that Austria brought, to make the Habsburgs feel at home in the old Turkish domains, alongside the "traditional" architecture of old.

Karahasan picks a fitting metaphor for the passing of the city's old way: the destruction, in the summer of 1992, of the Hotel Europa, "the physical and semantic center" of Sarajevo. Hotel Europa lay at the border between the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian parts of the city. Middle Eastern and Central European elements were jumbled together in a hybrid establishment. It was a place, the nostalgist writes, "where Sarajevo can be felt with one's fingertips, where it can be smelled and sensed." By the time the hotel was set ablaze by an artillery barrage, the Sarajevo of old belonged to memory. For Sarajevo had to be laid low, if the new conquests were to have a chance. The Serbs seduced by Sarajevo's ways—"the apartment-building Serbs," the Serb ultras call them—had to be summoned back to the tribe. The example of a place that erased lines had to be obliterated.

"The Turks are going to be like walnuts in a Serbo-Croat nutcracker," said a Serb in Radovan Karadzic's gang. The dilemma of Bosnia was all its own. It took precious little time for the vulnerabilities of Bosnia to be put on cruel display. No sooner had Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in June 1991, than the stage was set for the cruel scramble for Bosnia. Bosnia lacked Slovenia's homogeneity, and its distance from Serbia; and it lacked Croatia's power. Slovenia, of course, was the easiest case: there were few Serbs in Slovenia and it was granted a quick and easy divorce. Croatia was a messier affair. Its destiny clashed with that of Serbia. Ten percent of the population of the proposed Croat entity were Serbs; a grim fight was inevitable, and it was fought in 1992. But the Serb-Croat war was a war of borders, a limited war. The Serbs reasoned that Western Europe and Germany and the Vatican would not permit an outright conquest of Croatia and the consequent slaughter.

The fight for Bosnia was different. Here Serbian nationalism was vengeful, a campaign of "politicide." The very idea of Bosnia was at issue. There was no Serbian restraint. The Yugoslav army had become a Serb instrument of war. In prosecuting the war against Croatia, the army of rump Yugoslavia had built protected turfs in Bosnia, and they came in handy in the campaigns of "ethnic cleansing" and in the uneven struggle between Bosnia's Muslims and the Serbs. The abandon with which the Serbs fought this war was owed not least to their definitions of their victims. Those were "Turks" and "Muslim fundamentalists" that the Serbs were cutting down.

The Serbs concluded also that nobody would come to the rescue of Bosnia. An old legend about the martial virtues of the Serbs (a legend like the one that was circulating about Iraq's Republican Guard before that particular bluff was called) served as an excuse for Western abdication. It was the passivity of the United States in the period of its global primacy that put the Bosnians and their cause in great peril. And so it was that the city that lived on sufferance became

Bosque del Apache

Winter. Scratchy branches flame
upward, stiff as ratted hair.
Crows crown the leafless trees—
black buds that bloom in unison
only to fly. At dawn, the marsh
is crowded as a skating rink;
ducks land in squadrons, swim
in pairs. Geese honk to be let by.
Like them, we're stalled in traffic,
caught in a cavalcade circling
the one-way fifteen mile tour loop,
binoculars in every lap.
We scout to see what we're missing,
and end by missing what we're seeing.
The sky's too busy and too vast.
Lavender-orange masses of clouds,
lit from below, stagily surge
and disperse, while from the farthest East
daylight's dark stars flap their wings,
assume their shifting constellations,
and stream over us, crossing the sky
like corps de ballet after corps de ballet,
undulant velvet ribbons trailing.
Each bird, a basted stitch puckering
the sky's pale blue satin smock;
each flock, an intricate design
in thread the seamstress forgot to lick
and double-knot. And so it goes.
A V of cranes unravels, rivaling
the geese for noise.

Carol Moldaw

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the city that lived on suffering.

The American abdication never even paid the Bosnians the compliment of candor. The truth about our inaction had to be covered up; and so our cavalry was always a day or a provocation away. We picked our way through the colorful history of the Balkans in search of exculpations, and they were not hard to find. Where ordinary bullies and tacky brigands with expensive sunglasses ran protection rackets and a former Belgrade banker and Communist Party hack tested the limits of what he could get away with, we saw implacable ghosts and ancient furies, irresistible and primeval forces rising from the land itself, from a romantic and unchanging history. The president of the United States backed away from military action after reading a book called *Balkan Ghosts*. This preference for ghosts is understandable. Whatever else they are, ghosts are not policy problems. Statesmen are powerless against haunted places. You cannot launch an air strike against the fourteenth century. And so the Serbs have been busy spinning their stories. They have a need for them, so great have been their crimes. But we, too, have a need for the old-wives' tales. They have made it easier for us to avert our gaze. •

Closet Space

BY CHRISTINE STANSELL

Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World 1890-1940 by George Chauncey

(Basic Books, 478 pp., $25)

As civic life in America grows increasingly attenuated, the rituals of public history languish, prey to the divisions of interest groups and a general cynicism about the existence of any shared history that Americans might agree to celebrate. It is all the more interesting, then, that this year one of those interest groups, gay Americans, staged a wildly successful historical commemoration. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the rebellion against a police raid at New York's Stonewall Bar seemed an unlikely occasion to launch a major public holiday compared to, say, the anniversary of Lexington and Concord. Yet with its parades, sports competitions, stump speeches, amateur entertainments and celebrity panache—even its own historical pageant—the Stonewall anniversary in its own campy way evoked the cornpone vitality of bygone Fourth of Julys.

George Chauncey's book, its publication timed to coincide with the Stonewall events, shares some of this civic-minded exuberance. Chauncey's gay city is not a sealed community of identity politics, entrance forbidden to outsiders. It is more like a colossal, clandestine, movable feast of sexual and social experimentation, the location and the character of the guests shifting over time.

Chauncey's book reads as affirmation, but as criticism and admonition as well. He is interested in confronting, not embellishing, the popular mythology that energized the Stonewall commemoration. He encapsulates this as the myth of the historical closet: the notion that for years (indeed, for centuries) before the eruption of gay liberation in 1969, homosexuals were isolated, persecuted and stranded in a sea of uncomprehending hostile straight people. He seeks to replace that simplistic narrative with one that emphasizes historical circumstance and cultural fluidity, in which an appreciation of the supple possibilities of the "double life" replaces the grimmer, if more heroic, metaphor of the closet.

Chauncey's book breathes a *largesse* of political spirit, a willingness to put treasured truisms to the test of evidence and to evaluate sympathetically the past's claims for itself. It sustains some of the highest virtues of American social history: assiduous archival work, intricate stories, a democratic view of historical agency, a strong overarching interpretation. If there are still odd failures of interest and lapses of attention, they may have to do with the ways in which social history, for all its egalitarian intent, ennobles and embellishes its immediate subjects while relegating everyone else to a hazy background.

Chauncey's argument is rooted in a long, complicated and exhaustively researched excursion into the social history of communal male subcultures in early twentieth-century New York. Long before Stonewall, he shows, the "fairy" was a well-known social type, as recognizable to New Yorkers at the turn of the century as the street Arab, the prostitute, the organ-grinder. Fairies were men who advertised their effeminacy—and by extension, their sexual availability to other men—by wearing drag, borrowing women's names (Salomé, the Duchess of Marlborough, Big Tess), plucking their eyebrows or simply wearing red neckties. They camped it up in the tough dives of the Bowery, the immigrant East Side and Coney Island, congregating in the same spots where prostitutes gathered. Indeed, they catered to the same clientele.

Working-class partners of fairies did not see themselves, Chauncey insists, as different in their sexual appetites from other men: sailors, tramps, day laborers and longshoremen picked as lovers both women and men who seemed like women. To put the point more abstractly, it was a sexual actor's position in the gender hierarchy, his embrace of a male or a female persona, and not his orientation toward one anatomical sex or another, that was salient. Sex with fairies, prostitutes or female partners could be quite similar: sex, as Chauncey bluntly observes, was something a man did *to* another, not *with* another, a quest for orgasmic relief that involved penetrating an orifice whose particular anatomical affiliations were not necessarily important.

Neighborhood toughs gang-raped fairies just as they did prostitutes and other female victims. Sometimes, in the context of men's worries about venereal disease and their notions about women's innate dirtiness, sex with a fairy could even seem more hygienic. Thus a vice investigator recounted to his superiors how a sailor appealed to his fastidiousness in trying to seduce him in a washroom: "I was about to leave and he said 'It smells like a c... house. Did you have a woman lately?' I said 'No, I am looking for one.'... He said 'Wouldn't it be much safer to have it blown?'" Thus men's identity as men did not depend on the sex of their partner, though it did depend on the partner's imagined sex: "Men had to be many things in order to achieve the status of normal men, but being 'heterosexual' was not one of them."

By 1900, the first generation of medical experts on sexual identity (Havelock Ellis, Krafft-Ebbing, Freud) had familiarized an educated public with a strictly drawn distinction between the homosexual and the heterosexual. The new sexology, Chauncey points out, was based in large part on their observations of the working-class fairies whom the police were nabbing on the streets of the big

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cities and depositing in clinics, prisons and hospitals. So while working-class men still did not think of their sexual practices in terms of these oppositions, middle-class men did. In the strict privacy of their homes and diaries, some respectable men came to believe that their deep feelings for other men, romances that the Victorians had accepted as platonic forerunners or counterparts to marriage, did constitute a distinct "queer" identity. These men were often drawn to ideas of an "intermediate sex" or a "third sex" popularized by sexual thinkers on the left as an antidote to the moralistic categories of the sexologists. "We are neither wholly man, woman or child," the Harvard literary critic F. O. Matthiesen wrote his lover, the painter Russell Cheney. "Just as there are energetic, active women and sensitive delicate men, so also there are ... men, like us, who appear to be masculine but have a female sex element."

By the First World War, refined men, feeling themselves to be queer yet anxious lest queerness tumble them out of respectable life, looked on the fairies of the downtown dives as shameful. The tawdry demeanor of the fairies, and the association of male/male sex with poverty, criminality and male brutishness, were *déclassé* and humiliating. They were a precipitant, supposedly, of the public's anti-gay hostility, which hampered men's ability to live decorously, loving whom they might. Men who traveled in Germany before and after the war sharpened the contrast between the situation in New York and the polite, comfortable gay life they believed the German homosexual rights movement had engendered on the continent. In Europe, they contended, gay men lived in "happy, blissful unions" rather than as hostages to "the underworld of perversions and crimes" where American gays were driven by "their very real craving for love."

Chauncey's detailed interpretation of class uncovers the hostilities that energized the disdain of respectable gays for their *outré* fellows, hostilities that fueled homophobia among gays as well as straights. There is a gallant democratic interest at work in his delineation of the importance of poor people—tramps, prisoners, migrant workers, immigrants and sailors—to creating a community whose stereotype in the twentieth century would often be marked by the accoutrements of the well-to-do: fine clothes, elegant manners, cosmopolitan sophistication, involvement in the arts. The impulse extends to African America: in one especially remarkable section, Chauncey demonstrates the centrality to gay life of the "vast cultural experiment" that was Harlem, its dashing "bulldaggers" and "faggots" more visible in its streets, nightclubs and "buffet flats" than anywhere in the city, its huge fantastic yearly drag ball a magnet to sexual transgressors from all over.

Despite the repugnance of respectable gays, however, the sexual milieus of working-class fairies and established gentlemen converged by the end of the war, creating a full-fledged subculture akin to that of an urban ethnic group. Like other urban subcultures, its ethnography and its cartography were most fully known to its inhabitants, but it was, Chauncey argues, hardly a secret, no more "in the closet" to those who were interested, gay or straight, than was, say, Afro-Caribbean New York. Newcomers to the city with homosexual interests could easily find an entrée by stopping at the YMCAs, where friends and lovers could reveal to them "the finely calibrated sexual map of the city."

The low-life erotics of public sex, casual sex with multiple partners and sex with strangers spread through bathhouses and public restrooms where middle-class and working-class men mingled. Well-known meeting places dotted uptown and downtown, a network of connections woven into the mesh of metropolitan life. In certain cafeterias, for example, gay men gathered all day, mixing unobtrusively with other patrons; but after midnight they turned the joints into fairy hang-outs, playing to the gawky sightseers at the windows who were ogling the spectacle of big city perversity. A Manhattanite who emigrated from the Bronx in 1939 remembered the scene at a cafeteria on Sheridan Square (near what was later the site of the Stonewall Bar):

> Faggots from all over the country would gather there. They'd just sit in the window, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes and carrying on. It had huge plate glass windows so people on the street could see in, and tourists would pass by to see them, because they wore heavy makeup—blue eye shadow, rouge, mascara—and had long hair.

The men whom Chauncey interviewed who had come to New York in the war years and '20s reminisced of this era in the elegiac cadences of the New York *bildungsroman*, with its lyrical sense of possibility. "From the gay side of the Astor Hotel bar to the bushes behind the Forty-Second Street library to the public tearoom right outside of Fordham University ... to the eighth floor restroom in the RCA building," one man recalled fondly, "New York seemed to be one big cruising ground." Among the millions at Coney Island each summer were gay men, who often blended with family parties and knots of fellow ethnics but at times staked out a piece of the beach for themselves. A male beauty contest at Coney Island in 1929 turned into an extravaganza, taking the judges aback, when a mostly male audience materialized and contestants appeared in paint and powder. Meanwhile, cruising men strolled through the city crowds. To the *cognoscenti*, gay and straight, they announced themselves through a code of dress and gesture. "The eyes, the eyes, they're a dead giveaway," mused one man.

Chauncey takes some pains to darken the nostalgia that such reminiscences produce. The police and the vice squads were always lurking in the shadows of the "big cruising ground." Indeed, Chauncey's meticulous and beautifully accomplished recreation of the city's sexual map emerges from his painstaking research in police and trial records for crimes of disorderly conduct, degeneracy and lewdness. Moral disapproval, shading at times into vigilantism, stalked the "shoals of painted, perfumed, Kohl-eyed, lisping, mincing youths." Police and vice investigators wound their way through

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the baths and cafeterias and the rowdy crowds at the beaches and in the parks. Civic associations dedicated to social purity reform supplemented police efforts. A washroom assignation could end in doing time in the workhouse or in prison, and in revelations that wreaked havoc in a man's personal life. But while Chauncey never slights the role of official repression, or suggests that the 1910s and '20s were a golden era of tolerance, he implies that the vitality of the subculture outstripped the forces of regulation. The New York closet, he maintains, "was a very large closet indeed ... with doors the police occasionally pried open" but that, more often, gay men themselves opened and shut.

What put an end to the upward swing, ironically, was not the crackdown of Prohibition on New York highlife, but Prohibition's repeal. During Prohibition, homosexuality became a generic element of the speakeasies, a spice of the perverse in the high life of well-heeled slummers already titillated by the "primitive" in the earlier vogue for Harlem entertainments. "Pansies" performed for the first time in significant numbers in the Times Square cabarets. Several Broadway plays, including Mae West's raucous *The Drag*, capitalized on the interest of sophisticated urbanites. A pansy club opened in Times Square; Gene Malin, a Brooklyn-born female impersonator who started out on the drag ball circuit, rose to celebrity in the swanky nightclub scene by swishing and bantering with straight audiences. But repeal reeled the clubs, bars and restaurants back into the purview of official regulation and signaled the end of a middle-class mania for flouting convention.

New regulations for liquor licenses established sanctions against disorderliness in after-hours establishments; the simple presence of homosexuals, prostitutes, gamblers and other "undesirables" was sufficient evidence of disorderliness for the revocation of a license. Equivalent developments in entertainment forced gay comics, queens, impersonators and actors underground. Vaudeville theaters began to clamp down on slang and suggestiveness in their acts, new laws prohibited female impersonation, and the Hollywood production code of 1930 outlawed any reference to "sex perversion" in the movies. By the onset of the Second World War, anti-gay vigilance had recast the image of the simpering pansy into the lurking unshaven sex deviant: murderer, pedophile. It was these specific historical circumstances, not some ancient history of the closet, that Chauncey leads us to understand gave rise to the intense repressiveness of the pre-Stonewall era.

Chauncey's account is a complex ethnography, dense and intimate. At times, however, the detail washes over the analysis. The subjects, gay men, are so richly imagined that others, one step removed, suffer by comparison, entering in as abstractions, ciphers or blurs. This problem is most striking in Chauncey's treatment of lesbians (in particular) and women (in general). At some point in the story lesbians begin to materialize in the gay bars and restaurants and to participate, mysteriously, in the affinities of queerness. They fail, however, to figure directly in the book's argument. Gayness remains utterly male.

Interpretative threads sometimes disappear. The theme of class difference, raised powerfully in early parts of the book, gets lost in the carnivalesque, polyglot Times Square world where gay male culture kicks out all the stops in the late 1920s and early '30s and where queers from all walks of life gather. The book's sympathetic rendition of flamboyant nightlife might suggest that the sheer momentum of American popular culture, its hunger for new sources of pleasure and styles of performance, cleared a space large enough for gay men from every niche of the city to meet and enact collectively the double life. But how this accommodation between low-life wolves and discreet queers was accomplished remains vague; so does the explanation for their collective transformation into an incipient gay community, where sexual orientation muted class distinctions.

How did well-to-do men, concerned at the turn of the century with the degraded tone of homosexual life, come to adopt and to enjoy so many manly pleasures of the working class? A part of the answer to this question of cross-class accommodation might lie in the emergence of a newly uplifting view of sexual slumming. Like other middle-class people in the first two decades of the century, these men sought to ground new sexual freedoms, practices like homosexual and free love that the Victorians understood as vice-ridden and low, in renovated norms of love, intimacy and stable union. A faint language of homosexual rights, imported from Germany, sought to place male love within the ethical reach of the middle class, to uphold the ideal of a sweet and decent love between men. In this intellectual context, there was a certain hope in the suggestion that the homosexual constituted a new kind of sexual person. For artists and intellectuals especially (such as Matthiesen and Cheney), the notion of the "intermediate sex" beckoned toward a role for homosexuals (certainly men, more problematically, lesbians) in modern culture as mediators who moved between the sexes, translating the imperatives and aesthetics of each to the other.

At the turn of the century, high-minded homosexuals also had envisioned, hesitantly, a role for the third sex as intermediaries between the classes: as men who would sponsor, in a Whitmanian sort of way, a comradeship that transcended brute sensuality to promote mutual understanding and respect. The British writer John Addington Symonds described his journey through the London streets and slums in search of working-class partners as a movement from voyeurism—a lust for "vice and passion in the proletariat"—to a lofty ethic of service: "I imbibed a strong democratic enthusiasm, a sense of the dignity and beauty and glory of simple healthy men."

This elevation of sexual slumming, best known now through E.M. Forster's autobiographical novel *Maurice*, was one strain of incipient sexual modernism. In New York, with its Whitmanian legacy and its network of working-class sexual locales, the habit of erotic voyeurism must have been especially resonant. Think of Whitman strolling the avenues with an eye out for omnibus drivers—among his favorite partners—and then consider the modernist composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes prowling the streets for sympathetic-seeming police officers who (Chauncey, ever the demon researcher, carefully notes) stood at intersections before the advent of traffic lights. Griffes and his friends, Chauncey mischievously reports, found some of New York's finest especially willing pick-ups.

Still, there remains a considerable gap between an ethos of cross-class brotherhood, rooted in nineteenth-century romanticism, and the raunchy *praxis* of working-class men. An explanation of how it closed must ultimately turn to the mysterious sexual alchemy of the city itself. New York's position as capital of American sexual freedom, its preeminence for the rest of the country (through the books, plays, magazines, art, entertainers and scandals it exported) in producing erotic thrills, has always depended on the circulation of sexual practices and images across class lines. The city's fabled division into two halves, one of "sunlight," and the other of "shadows"—a trope dating back to the Victorians—was a way of imagining the proximity of respectable life to that of

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What are the facts?

Historical Background—The Golan was always part of the Jewish homeland. The Syrian claim to the Golan is tenuous. Syria, as a political entity, did not exist at all until after the first World War.

Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

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Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

> "With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—except for the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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unimaginable and unspeakable dark pleasures. Even as decorous queers might wrinkle their noses at their low-life counterparts, slumming downtown and uptown in Harlem made the closet of the affluent that much bigger and gave it a considerable erotic charge. And while the voyeurism of the respectable toward the rough predominated, erotic signs moved the other way as well, as gay culture ironically adopted the trappings of high society, from the slang term "coming out," a send-up of debutantes' balls, to the gorgeous dresses and natty tuxedos of the drag affairs.

Chauncey is perceptive about the social features of New York that supported gay culture: the presence of a huge population of single young men, and the residential patterns of the tenements and rooming houses. But he is less attuned to the ineffable qualities of metropolitan life. Knowledge of the double life, gleaned from outside and inside, was a reward of the city itself. The "secret" of homosexuality was shared prolifically. How easily you could see through the subterfuges and read the codes depended on how much of an insider you were. Being privy to sexual second sight was tantamount to being a sophisticated citizen of America's premier sexual city, a recruit to modern metropolitan culture.

The sly knowingness that New York fostered among its residents would, even in the dark days of gay repression, wind its way out to the provinces by means of the entertainment industries. Chauncey concludes, affectingly, with an image of discreet gays packing a Judy Garland concert at Carnegie Hall. Against this comparatively well-known episode, however, place these more mundane pieces of entertainment history that he unearths from cartoons and movies produced in the late '30s and '40s: Bugs Bunny, in drag, gives Elmer Fudd a big wet smack; Laurel and Hardy cuddle up in bed, Stan sucking a bottle that Ollie holds. Through the '50s and '60s, these were among the odd images that wafted across the country, the sources of their manic energy puzzling and inviting. The scantily disguised sexual irony, sanitized by the venue of television, would tease innumerable viewers with hints that all was not as it seemed, that the fixities were not so fixed: one clue that whatever provincial closet, sexual or social, you happened to live in, the way out lay in the direction of New York City.

CHRISTINE STANSELL is writing a book about sex, art and politics in America at the turn of the century.

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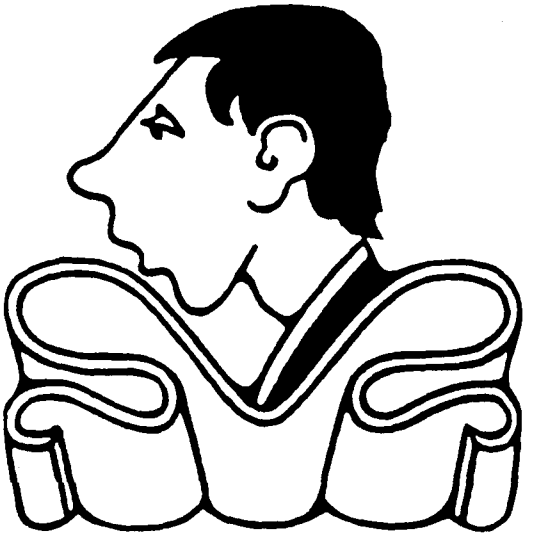
Is Religion Just for Dimwits?



Among the well-educated, the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's a renewed interest in traditional religion. And why not? The intellectual world is littered with fake remedies and gods that failed, and the supply of substitutes for the Real Thing is running out.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with the transcendent. We examine contemporary issues, and contend for a more just and virtuous world, without subordinating religion to political ideology. We probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such giants as Aquinas, Dante, Thomas More, Kierkegaard, Newman, Dostoyevsky, Chesterton, Eliot, Maritain, Niebuhr, Solzhenitsyn, Muggeridge, Dorothy Day, C.S. Lewis, Flannery O'Connor, Mother Teresa, and Pope John Paul II.

A monthly magazine established in 1977, we've been characterized by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky," by Bernard Cardinal Law as "excellent," by *National Review* as "first-rate," by Annie Dillard as "terrific," by *Library Journal* as "brilliant," and by George Will as "splendid."

A robustly Catholic magazine, we affirm the teachings of the Church — be they doctrinal, sexual, or social — and yet we honor the spiritual contributions of other churches. Our ecumenism engages non-Catholics at the highest common denominator of faith, not the lowest. Among the diverse writers who've appeared in our pages are Walker Percy, Christopher Lasch, Russell Kirk, George Kennan, Daniel Bell, John Lukacs, Robert Coles, Sheldon Vanauken, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Henri Nouwen, Avery Dulles, John T. Noonan Jr., Stanley Hauerwas, Peter Kreeft, Francis Canavan, and Germain Grisez. Yes, we're "influential," to quote the *Los Angeles Times*.

We rely on compelling substance and lucid prose, instead of glitz, to attract our readers. Whether or not you're Catholic, if you're committed to the proposition that faith and intelligence are decidedly compatible, give us a try!

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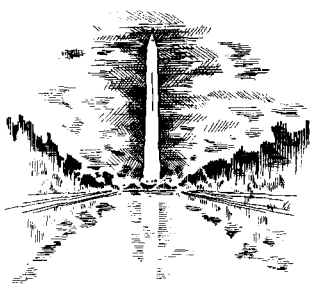
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Citizens

A FEW SUMMERS AGO, A FRIEND and I flew to Oregon to pick pears with migrant workers. We had a month to kill, and wanted an adventure that combined rugged physical exertion with a hint of social conscience. But the expedition ended badly. When we arrived in Medford, suspicious foremen, convinced we were muckrakers or immigration agents, insisted they had no work. After a week of rejections, we were reluctantly hired by a small company, and soon discovered why we were the only American citizens in the field. We reported to the orchard at 6 a.m., were given a flimsy ladder and a wooden crate, and picked the pears one at a time, removing the stems to make sure they didn't puncture other pears in the crate. Working side by side, my friend and I managed to fill half a crate after three hours. Then the foreman came by and summarily rejected our entire crate because it had too many puncture marks. Starting from scratch, under the piercing sun, we managed to fill an entire crate by 3 p.m., which earned us $19.35 each. At this point, the foreman begged us to quit; we were slowing down his operation and bruising his crop. When we insisted on returning the next day, he became belligerent, and rejected our punctured fruit more aggressively than ever. After a week of Tantalus-like exertions, we had earned, between us, less than $200. Nevertheless, we felt lucky. Several weeks before we arrived, a worker had fallen out of a tree and twisted his back. Instead of treatment, the company gave him a bus ticket back to Mexico.

PROPOSITION 187, WHICH WOULD cut off public benefits for illegal aliens in California, including education and non-emergency health care, is obviously unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's *Plyler* decision, which said that Texas violated "fundamental conceptions of justice" when it excluded the children of aliens from free public schools almost twenty years ago. Supporters of Proposition 187 concede that it's inconsistent with *Plyler*, but the composition of the Court has changed, and they want to force the new justices to reexamine the decision. Although their economic and political arguments are specious (see "Don't Panic," p. 7), their constitutional intuition, that the Court has gone too far in eroding the distinction between aliens and citizens, can't be so easily dismissed.

THE TEXT OF THE CONSTITUTION draws clear distinctions between citizens and aliens. The first sentence of the Fourteenth Amendment, passed after the Civil War to overrule the infamous *Dred Scott* decision and to enfranchise newly freed slaves, confers citizenship on "all persons born or naturalized in the United States *and subject to the jurisdiction thereof.*" The second sentence goes on to distinguish between "the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States," which include a broad range of substantive civil rights and benefits, and the narrower guarantee of "the equal protection of the laws," which is extended to all persons, aliens as well as citizens. The Court's innovation in the '70s and '80s was to erode the distinction between citizens and aliens by holding that aliens are entitled to many of the benefits that previously had been reserved for citizens alone.



IN *CITIZENSHIP WITHOUT CONSENT*, Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith argue that the Court, by steadily expanding the substantive rights of aliens, has contributed to the "devaluation of American citizenship." They make a liberal case for reinvigorating a consensual ideal of citizenship that requires mutual agreement between the national community and the individual immigrant. The framers of the Fourteenth Amendment, they argue, intended to make birthright citizenship for the children of unassimilated Indian tribes—the closest nineteenth-century analogue to undocumented aliens—a matter of congressional choice rather than constitutional prescription. (During the congressional debate in 1866, one representative worried that if the children of "Chinese and Gypsies" were to become birthright citizens in California, then "the day may not be very far distant when California, instead of belonging to the Indo-European race, may belong to the Mongolian.") Schuck and Smith, in other words, would achieve by judicial interpretation the radical result that Governor Wilson would achieve by a federal constitutional amendment: denying automatic American citizenship to alien children born on American soil. At the same time, Schuck and Smith would soften the blow of their proposal by removing the bureaucratic obstacles that discourage aliens from becoming citizens in the first place. Their book provides a rallying point for liberals who think 187 goes too far but are nonetheless sympathetic to the impulse to resurrect the distinction between citizens and strangers.

NOBODY IS CONFUSED ABOUT HIS or her status on my favorite T.V. show, "Are You Being Served," the low-rent British import from the 1970s which Peter Bradshaw of *The Modern Review* recently celebrated as the most politically incorrect sitcom in history. The setting is Grace Brothers, a fading London department store where the characters cling to their petty hierarchies and prerogatives. Twenty years ago in England, the show struck a chord for its send-up of the class system; what makes it seem so radically fresh and liberating on PBS reruns today is that it manages, without a hint of self-consciousness, to reduce every character to a wild sexual or ethnic stereotype. There is the shriekingly effeminate menswear assistant, Mr. Humphries, who flutters about exclaiming "I'm free!"; the geriatric proprietor, Young Mr. Grace, whose pacemaker overheats whenever one of his bosomy nurses bends over; and the Fagin-like accounting assistant, Mr. Goldberg, who chants and sways as he adds up his ledgers. All of the Japanese customers have clicking cameras, all of the black customers are African chieftains, and every physical peculiarity—from Mr. Rumbold's huge ears to Mr. Granger's truss—is a source of relentless exaggeration and derision. The sublime crassness of the show is exemplified, as *The Modern Review* notes, by the famous exchange when Miss Brahms complains about the quality of the underwear she has to sell, and Mrs. Slocombe retaliates by confiscating her padded bra.

> MRS. SLOCOMBE: I will not have you knocking my knickers.
> MISS BRAHMS: And I'm not so keen on you nicking my knockers!

But behind the wide lapels and abject sexism, there is a poignant innocence to the hermetically sealed world of Grace Brothers. Because all the characters have a firm sense of who they are and who they are not, and because they wear their identities and vulnerabilities so close to the surface, they can ridicule and insult each other mercilessly without threatening their grudging ties to each other. Each episode is a pro-immigrationist's nightmare: a community that seems ultimately open and tolerant precisely because its boundaries are closed.

JEFFREY ROSEN

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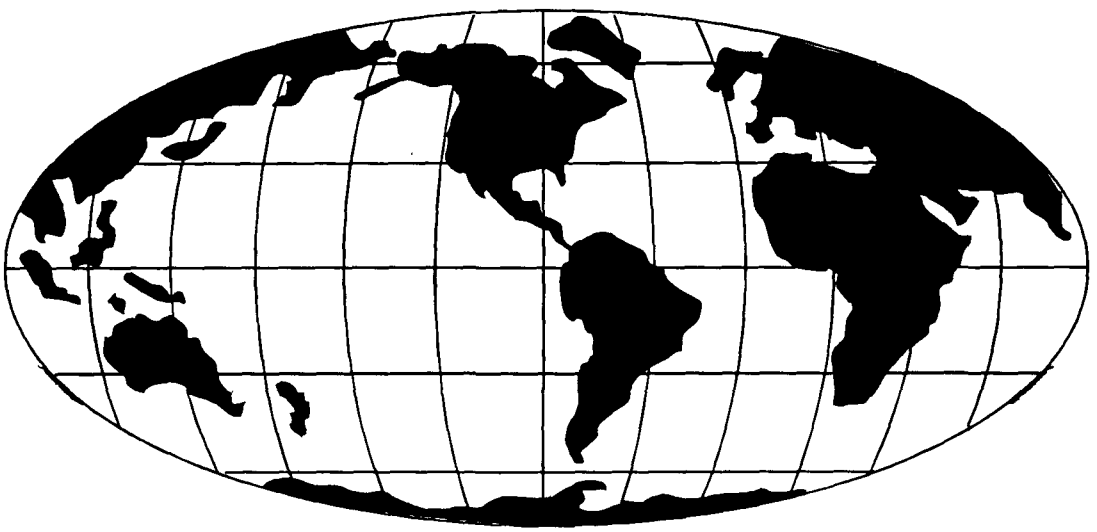

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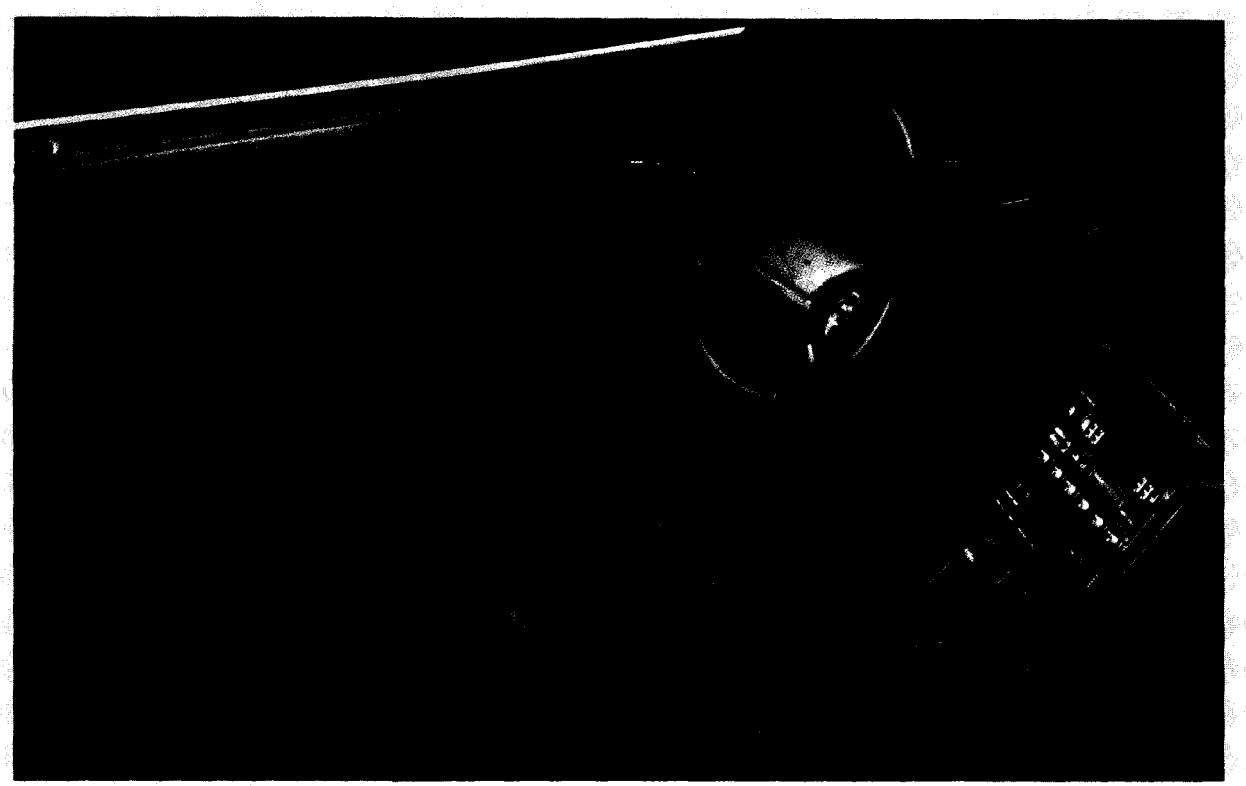

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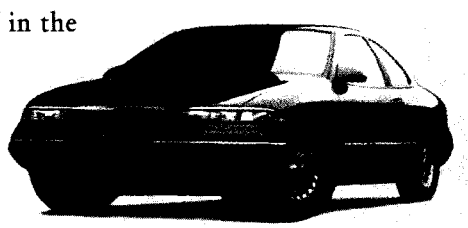

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